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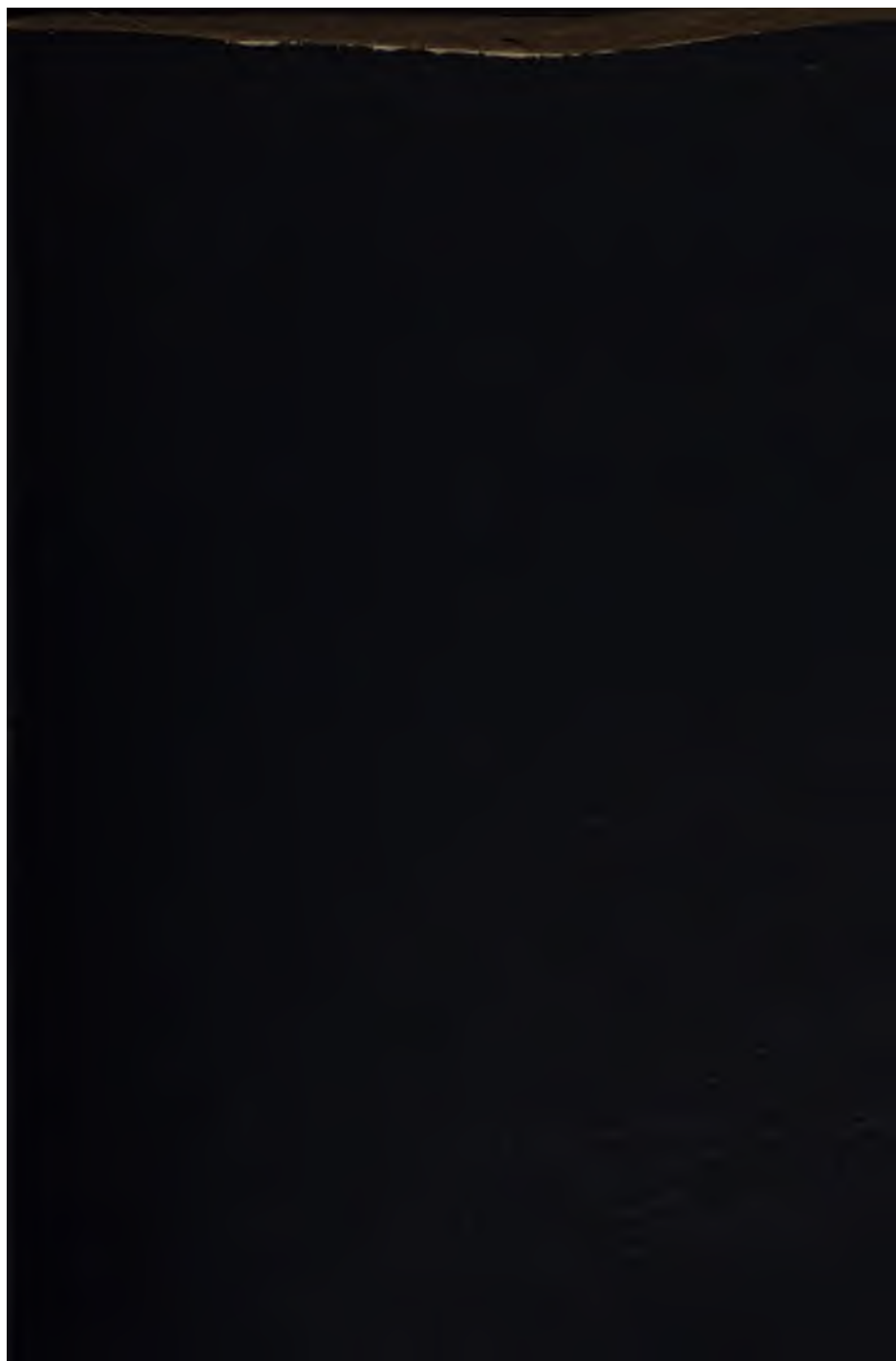
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**D O L O R E S.**

**VOL. II.**

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# D O L O R E S.

BY

MRS. FORRESTER,

AUTHOR OF

"FAIR WOMEN," "MY HERO,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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# D O L O R E S.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN ST. OUEN.

AND all this time Dolores was half-breaking her heart up in the little white house that overlooked one of the fairest scenes in Normandy. She seemed to be quite changed from the shallow, thoughtless child we knew her first; this strange passion and bitter disappointment had altered her nature. If things had gone smoothly, no doubt she would have remained as frivolous and superficial as when we first saw her; but this grief, this constant dull pain, and waiting and longing for what would never come, had given a depth to

her feelings that was far from natural to a character like hers. But it was sad to see the change—to see her transformed from the blithe, thoughtless child, romping with her cat and dog, eager after flowers and sweetmeats and gay shops, to the sad, listless girl, who noticed so little, and seemed always brooding over a secret sorrow. She would sit for hours, her hands lying idle in her lap, her eyes far away over the distant green hills, while the fresh, soft air, laden with all the sweet scent of Summer flowers, kissed her face; and yet she saw nothing—nothing outward at least—only the kind, handsome face of the man who filled her every thought.

Marcelline bustled about, and tried to be very brisk and cheerful, but her heart ached to see the child so silent and forlorn.

“*Tiens ! petite,*” she would say, quite sharply; “it is not like that one gets through life—always moping and fretting. There are more men in the world than

one. Bah ! If he did not think of me, I should be too proud to break my heart about him. I would rather dress St. Catherine's hair than run after a man who did not care for me."

So the kind soul thought to stimulate the child's pride into forgetting her sorrow.

"Leave me," answered Dolores, the colour flushing into her cheeks. "If I am sad, I do not ask consolation or pity from you."

"Do not be angry with poor Marcelline, *petite chérie*; she only wants to see you smile again. Come down to the market to-day, and we will go on the Quai, and see the fine young soldiers."

"I care not for the soldiers—I hate Frenchmen!—and the market is stupid. But I will go to the church, and you can leave me there until you return."

"The church, the church,—always the church ! *Petite*, if you were of our religion, the good priests would soon make a *reli-*

*gieuse* of you. Ah! what a pretty little sister, with the great black hood and the long, ugly dress!"

"I wish I was one," replied Dolores.

"La, la!" cried Marcelline. "Wait until you have got over your moping fit, and some fine young fellow comes along and wants to marry you, and we shall see then whether you are still so eager to become a *religieuse*. No, no, no, my child, leave that to the old and ugly ones, who have no pretty faces, and no *dots* to get husbands for them."

"I shall never marry," cried Dolores, indignantly.

"Ah! never is a long time, *chérie*. We shall see, we shall see. Go and put on your hat, if you will really go to the church, while I run and see that Jeanneton does not spoil the *goûter*."

And she went off into the kitchen, where she found Jeanneton ruminating with a saucepan in her hand.

"*Tiens !*" she called out, in her brisk voice, that made the old woman jump, "it is not by standing in the middle of the kitchen and looking at the things that the work advances."

"*Peste !*" retorted her factotum, "thou wouldst have done well, thou, to drive the poor negroes ; it's always go on, go on, go on—one must not stop a moment to get up again if one fell. I was thinking——"

"Ah ! it's bad to think," said Marcelline, sarcastically. "People who have to earn their bread should never waste their time like that. It's only fine ladies and *savants* who have to do with that foolishness."

"I was thinking," persisted Jeanneton, "that it's very strange what has come to Mam'selle all this Summer."

"Ah ! if that was all that thinking did for thee !" answered Marcelline, contemptuously.

"But other times she went about singing like a bird ; even I could hear her, and

she was always in and out of the kitchen wanting this and that, and laughing at everything, like a giddy one. Now she is silent and sad. I see her from the window sitting out on the grass under the apple-trees, looking as if she saw something a long way off, and not even taking notice of poor Fidélío, who walks on his hind legs to please her."

"Thou seest a great deal, for thou seest what is not," returned Marcelline, angrily. "One cannot always remain a child; if Mademoiselle is a little *triste* sometimes, the saints know it is dull enough."

"The Curé's brother has not been a long time," said Jeanneton, nodding her head shrewdly.

"Oh! it is that which thou seest when thou lookst into the saucepans!" said Marcelline, irately. "Do thy work, my girl, and leave thinking to thy betters," and she brisked off in not the best humour in the world.

A few minutes later, she and Dolores came out of the gate together. There was no laughing and running on before now, as in the olden times, no chiding of Marcelline for her fatness and slowness; to-day the faithful servant would have given anything to see the little childish tricks and ways that had tormented her formerly.

"Sans adieu, Mademoiselle," she said, cheerfully, as the girl went in at the green baize door of the church, and Dolores just nodded her head in response.

"What does she do all that long time by herself?" Marcelline wondered. Then she shook her head, and went off down the hill to the market-place.

Dolores, left to herself, wandered about up and down the long aisles. The time was past when she used to skip to and fro, with small meed of reverence, and shiver at the gloom of the old Norman church. She did not run curiously now and peer into the marble basin, to see the reflection



of the roof and the great pillars, nor strain her eyes to the bright-coloured windows, but walked along listlessly, sadly, feeling that the solemnity and mournfulness of the place were sympathetic to her sadness. Then she sat down in one of the chairs, and began to think about the old subject—Guy.

“Why does he not write to me?” she said. “Three months, and he has only written me that one little letter with the locket—all that I have of him is that and the picture. Ah! it is beautiful, that picture. If I had been really like that, he must have loved me; perhaps at first he thought I was, and then afterwards he was disappointed. Where is he now, I wonder? He has quite forgotten me in the midst of the great people and the beautiful ladies he must see at home in London. Does he love one of them? Oh! it would break my heart to believe that—that he gave to some one else what he refused to

me ! How tired I am of my life ! Will it always, always go on like this ? And I am so young, so young, and I have so many years to drag out before I can hope to die !” Then the bitter tears came into her eyes, and she buried her face in her hands.

Some one was watching her, standing in the shade of one of the great pillars, and feeling very pitiful of her sorrow. It was a man, apparently some forty years of age, rather tall, and slightly made, with a face bronzed by exposure, and the kindest expression in it that could be imagined. He had grey eyes, set very, very deep in his head ; his hair, that had been dark, was beginning to be sprinkled with white ; the mouth was finely cut, and had a grave, tender expression. He stood a long, long time watching Dolores, thinking how young and fair she was, and wondering what could make such a mere child so sorrowful. She was not dressed in black, or he might have

thought her crying bitterly after some one dear to her who had died, and her grief seemed too deep and silent to be caused by any mere childish mortification.

"Poor child! poor child!" he said to himself, "if I could only say or do something to comfort her!" But his instinctive delicacy made him shrink from intruding on her grief.

Then presently, after a long while, he heard footsteps approaching, and saw a comely, middle-aged woman, in the garb of a servant, advancing towards her.

"Tiens, chérie, viens donc avec ta pauvre Marcelline," he heard her say; and then the girl rose and went out, leaving the stranger more puzzled than before. He did not attempt to follow her, but remained where he was, leaning against the column, as if lost in thought. After a while he roused himself, like one who wakes up from a day-dream, and leaving St. Ouen, ascended the hill slowly, till he came to one

of the white *campagnes* that dot the landscape all round. Opening the gate, he went up the garden, and in at the open window, where a lady was sitting writing. He just greeted her, and she smiled a response; then he lighted a cigar, and sat down by the glass door. Presently the lady finished what she was writing, and looked at him.

"You seem to be in a brown study!" she remarked.

"I am puzzled," he answered, taking the cigar from his lips, and looking thoughtfully after the cloud that issued from between them.

"What has puzzled you?"

"I went into St. Ouen this morning, and there was a child there about sixteen or seventeen, with such a lovely face, but such a sad expression."

"Perhaps she had lost her father or mother."

"No, I do not think that, because she

wore a coloured dress, and coloured ribbons in her hat."

"You were very observant, then, for a man who professes not to know anything about ladies' dress."

"I watched her until she was so engraven on my mind, I don't think I should ever forget her. She sat a long time with her face buried in her hands, and when she looked up her eyes—such beautiful blue eyes!—were full of tears. After a time a respectable-looking servant came in and spoke to her, and she rose and went away."

"Had you the curiosity to follow her?"

"No—it did not occur to me. Mary" (this after a long pause), "what could have ailed the child?"

"I do not know, dear. Perhaps she had been disappointed in love."

"In love!" he repeated slowly after her—"in love!" And then he went on smoking, and did not speak again for a long time.

Mrs. Power had not failed to remark the change in Dolores, although the child strove hard to hide her sorrow in her mother's presence. They were rarely together. They had never been companions, but in the old days Dolores had been wont to sing blithly about the house, to romp with her dog, to slam doors, and do many things that jarred on her mother's sensitive, overstrung nerves. Now she went as quietly about the house as a little ghost. She did not laugh, nor speak loud, and had such a dreary, sorrowful expression. At first, on her return, Mrs. Power had fancied the child suffering from some temporary indisposition, but as week after week passed, and she was still silent, pre-occupied, mournful-looking, the woman who had seen and suffered so much of the world in the days gone by began to have terrible forebodings. She had had little sympathy with her child so long as she was a merry, frivolous, boisterous girl; but now, overshadowed by

the remembrance of her own sorrows, she trembled to think that she had brought into the world a creature with her own capacity for suffering. But what could ail the child? One day she said, with unwonted tenderness, "You seem unhappy, my dear." The child, who feared more than loved her mother, burst into tears, and ran out of the room, saying, "I am not unhappy." Then the mother sighed bitterly, and murmured, "It is my fault. I have been cold to her, and have never sought her confidence; she will not tell me what she suffers." Then, painful as it was to her pride, she resolved to question Marcelline.

It was a Summer evening. The red, mellow sunlight bathed the earth in a flood of gold, lighting up the red roses, the passion-flowers and jasmine that climbed the wall, and the big white lilies growing underneath. It came streaming warm through the branches of the apple-trees on Dolores' bright hair, across her little white

folded hands, and the knot of flowers in her breast. The picture was a fair one, but the mother who gazed on it turned away with a bitter sigh. She heard Marcelline's brisk patter on the polished stairs, and opening the door she called to her.

"Come in here, Marcelline—I want to speak to you;" and poor Marcelline, a little frightened, obeyed the summons.

Mrs. Power pointed through the open window to where Dolores sat.

"What ails my daughter?" she said, looking Marcelline in the face steadily.

"Madame?" stammered Marcelline, confused.

"You ought to know. She is quite changed, and it is all since I went away to England."

"Madame must remember that it is *triste* for Mademoiselle; she has no companions, no society."

"Neither had she before," said Mrs. Power. "Come away from the window;



she may hear our voices. Now, Marcelline, tell me the truth, honestly and fairly. There is something I do not know of. If there has been any fault, any imprudence, on my child's part or yours, I promise to overlook it; only tell me the truth."

Marcelline stood for some moments twisting her apron between her fingers, the colour deepening in her brown cheeks.

"Madame," she said at last, "I cannot say there is anything to tell. Madame surmises for herself that the *chère demoiselle* has some one in her thoughts."

"I thought as much," murmured Mrs. Power to herself. "Oh, how wrong I have been to leave her to the care of servants! As if she would not grow into a woman some day, to suffer too!"

Her lips quivered as she looked up at Marcelline's embarrassed face.

"Marcelline!" she cried, "I implore you to tell me the truth. Am I not her mother?" and there were tears in the

proud eyes, and the usually cold voice had grown pathetic.

Marcelline was moved. She was afraid of her mistress—afraid to tell the truth; and yet she said to herself, “It is my duty.”

“Madame,” she began, in a low, nervous voice, “you are right. I would have kept it from you; but you are her mother—you exact it, and I must speak. But, Madame, if you blame me, I entreat you not to show anger to the little one. Poor heart, it is already so sad!”

“I will not speak of it to her, whatever it may be.”

“Then, Madame, I will tell you all. A young English gentleman saw her standing in the garden picking flowers from the apple-trees, and he desired to paint her. He was quite a *grand seigneur*—any one could see that; and he looked brave and honest. If it had been a Frenchman, he should not have come inside the gate, nor

so much as spoken with the little innocent ; but he was English, and the English are not *galant*, like the French. He told me he should like to paint Mademoiselle. He gave Mademoiselle his card, by which she knew he was distinguished. The child was anxious, her life was dull, and I consented. Ah ! Madame, if I was foolish, imprudent, wicked, even to grant their prayers, the Holy Virgin knows if I have suffered." And Marcelline wiped the tears from her eyes.

Mrs. Power said nothing. She was looking out far away into the garden, and presently Marcelline went on—

"Monsieur came for nearly a fortnight. I was always present, and only French was spoken. They talked of Paris ; he told her of the gay sights and the fine shops, and of the Bois and the picture-galleries. And they spoke of flowers and gardens, and of England, and a thousand innocent subjects. Then I began to see, though he was

only kind to Mademoiselle like a brother, that in a little time she occupied herself with nothing but him. She was restless, she looked at the clock a hundred times in an hour, and watched impatiently his coming. It was then I began to feel sorry. I went to him, I made an excuse to leave her at home, and I told him he must not trifle with the little one's heart. He was a true gentleman—he did not hesitate. He wrote Mademoiselle a little letter of adieu, and went away without seeing her even once.”

Marcelline paused.

“Well?” said Mrs. Power, bringing her eyes from the window, and fixing them on Marcelline. Her face was very pale, and her lips worked nervously.

“Madame, the terrible part is to come.”

“Go on.” The voice was imperious, but strange and forced, as if with some awful dread.

“When she had his letter, she wept pas-

sionately—she refused all consolation. For three days she went about like one whose heart is broken, eating nothing. Then the fourth day, when I was gone to the market, she slipped away to the town, and went after him to Paris.”

The mother sat as if she had been turned to stone—her hands were tight locked, and there was a look in her eyes that terrified Marcelline. She went on quickly—

“He was very good and noble, that English gentleman. He knew the innocence of the little one’s heart, he would not profit by her simpleness. He brought her back to me at once, safe—quite safe. It was three days before you returned, Madame.”

There was a long silence—a darkness seemed to have fallen over the room, a darkness not because the red sunlight was fading away behind the hills, but because heaviness was in the hearts of these two silent women. They did not hear a soft

step, a half-hushed sob behind the door that stood ajar. Dolores had come in and heard Marcelline's last words. She stood for a moment full of anguish and terror, then she seized her hat from the peg where it hung, took the key from the table, and ran down the garden path to the gate, unseen.

"Cruel, cruel, Marcelline, to betray me!" she said, with a great sob, as she paused for a moment before unlocking it; and then she hurried out, and away down the hill.

Her heart was filled with a great fear. What would become of her now that her mother knew this terrible secret?—her mother, who had never been tender or loving to her in all her life—only cold, and even harsh. She thought she would run away somewhere, she knew not where; not to Paris, nor Guy—ah! not to him, since he cared nothing for her. How could she ever look in her mother's face again now that her shame was known? How meet the

stern, contemptuous gaze she felt would be directed towards her the next time she entered that dreaded presence?

## CHAPTER II.

## THE YELLOW SEINE.

THE poor child hurried down the hill with hasty, uncertain feet, feeling cruelly her helplessness, her loneliness, her impotency to decide for herself, and yet with one great certainty in her heart,—the certainty that she must never see her mother's face again. She went on and on until she came to the quay, then she walked along it until she had passed all the shops and houses and people. There was no one just here. It was growing dark, and Dolores knelt down on the beach and looked into the river. A strange feeling came over her—the feeling that possesses



many nervous minds when they look into the water, or gaze down from a great height. It was a kind of fascination ; she almost longed to throw herself in. Fantastic visions seemed to come before her of white, vapoury shadows, beckoning from beneath the water, and she thought of Andersen's pathetic story of the little mermaid who had loved the handsome prince. He had been very kind and good to her, had loved her like a little sister, but he would not make her his princess. Then, when she saw him with his beautiful bride in his arms, she had plunged the sharp knife into her poor sorrowful heart, and thrown herself deep down into the cold waters of forgetfulness.

"Would it be hard to die?" said the child in a whisper to herself. "If one were dead nothing would trouble one—no one would be angry any more." And she stretched out her hands to the water.

Warm as the Summer night was, it struck cold and chill. She shrank back, then she

stooped down a little nearer. With a violent start she felt some one catch her by the arm; then she seemed to fall forward, and, for a little while, she forgot everything.

It was quite dark when she came to her senses and looked up. Thousands of stars were shining in the dark blue vault above, and a kind face was bending over her, while warm hands clasped her chilled ones.

"Do not be afraid, my dear," said a voice—a very tender one for a man's voice—"you are quite safe."

"Where am I?" Dolores asked, feeling strangely sick and giddy.

"You looked too long into the water; you might have fallen in. I caught you, and startled you, perhaps. When you are better I will take you home."

"Home!" repeated the girl with a shiver, suddenly remembering everything,—  
—"no, not home." And she rose, and stood upright by herself.

"Where, then?" the stranger asked kindly. She stood for a minute without answering—then she said,

"Thank you, Monsieur, I am quite well now. I will go by myself, if you please."

"You are too young to be out alone so late," he answered gravely. "You must really let me go with you."

"I cannot," she said firmly. Then she looked up in his face, and seeing how kind and good it was, and what a tender pitiful expression it wore, she said beseechingly,

"Let me go, Monsieur."

He was silent, and she turned away. But as she walked on slowly, she felt that he was following her. They came back to the Quai, and she sat down on one of the great bales, with her face averted from him. He paused for a moment, and then came up close to her. "I do not want to intrude upon you, nor to pry into your secrets, but I know you are in trouble, and I want to help you."

The words were spoken so kindly and simply, they made the tears rush to Dolores's eyes ; but she was silent, for she could not find words to answer him.

"I have seen you twice in St. Ouen, when you were there alone and unhappy ; to-night I saw you hurrying down the hill, looking wild and miserable, and I followed you. Forgive me if I trouble you, but I am so anxious to help you."

For a moment Dolores thought she would tell this kind stranger everything, and he might advise her what to do ; then all her instinctive delicacy rushed back upon her, and she put the thought away. In her love and grief before, she had forgotten her modesty, had thrown herself into the arms of a man who cared nothing for her—should she make her shame and remorse still greater by confiding it to an utter stranger ?

"You are very good, Monsieur," she said in a low voice. "I thank you with all my

heart, but you cannot help me. I have been wicked and foolish."

"If it is so, my dear, do you think to mend matters by running away alone, and at this hour? Have you anyone you wish to go to?"

"There is no one who wants to have me," said the child bitterly, fresh tears coming in her eyes.

"Have you no father or mother?"

"I have a mother."

"Here in Rouen?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And you would go away and break her heart with anxiety for you?"

"She would be glad I was gone, now she knows what I have done."

"Is it something so terrible?"

"Yes," said Dolores, with a half-choked sob. "I did not see it then, but now."

"Come, come," whispered the stranger soothingly. "I hope you are making too much of the matter. I cannot fancy you

have done anything very dreadful, after all. It is getting so late. Does no one at home know where you are?"

"No. I ran away when I heard——"

"Heard what?"

"Marcelline tell Mamma."

"Then you did not go because your mother reproached or angered you?"

"No."

"Has she ever been cruel to you?"

"No."

"Come back with me, then, dear child. All this is some fancy on your part. You little know what a mother's love is, if you think it would turn a babe like you adrift on the world in a fit of anger. I daresay now she is searching everywhere in town for you, and vowing to forgive you all, if only you go back to her. Come."

"I cannot, I cannot," sobbed Dolores.

"Oh, Monsieur, leave me—only leave me!"

"To throw yourself into the Seine?"

"I did not mean to do that, indeed," stammered Dolores; "but I looked and looked, and it seemed as if some one beckoned me; and then—I thought I should never trouble anyone again—and I was so miserable!"

"Poor little child," said the kind grave voice, quite broken with pity for this unhappy, misguided little soul. "Come with me. I dare answer you will meet no harshness or severity if you do. I have a sister who is the kindest creature in the world, and she will take you and be good to you."

It began to dawn on Dolores that she had been very wrong and foolish, and that there was no help for her but to go home. So she rose from the great bale she had been sitting on, and walked by his side, while he held her hand in his, now and again giving it a kind reassuring pressure. They ascended the hill together, speaking very little, Dolores overcome by the weight

of her shame, he silent from delicacy.

Mrs. Power was standing at the gate, looking eagerly down the road.

"Dolores!" she cried, as the two came up to her. "Oh! child, why did you do this?" And she put her arms round the girl, and kissed her, to Philip Etherege's intense comfort.

Dolores was silent, stupefied for a moment; then she released herself from her mother's embrace, and ran past her through the garden. Mrs. Power recovered herself, and turned to the stranger.

"Is it you, sir, whom I have to thank for bringing my daughter back to me?"

Captain Etherege bowed.

"Where did you find her?"

"On the brink of the river, Madame."

The mother gave a terrified glance at him.

"Do you mean——"

"I think it would be well not to leave her too much alone," he said gently. "She



seems to have some great terror preying on her mind."

"Terror—of what ?" cried Mrs. Power, with a white blanchèd face, beginning to have all manner of horrible doubts.

"She told me she had done something foolish, and that she had run away because some one had told you of it. I have seen your daughter before. My sister and I take a deep interest in her, it is so sad that such a mere child—I beg your pardon, Madame, I will not intrude upon you any longer."

"I am deeply indebted to you," answered Mrs. Power, in a low voice ; "it must seem strange, but I cannot offer you any explanation of this matter."

"Not for the world!" cried Captain Etherege. "Pray do not say one word; believe me, I neither seek nor desire any explanation. If you will permit me to leave you my card, and to inquire at some future time after your daughter, it is the

greatest and only favour you can confer on me."

"If you wish it," Mrs. Power answered, unable to refuse his simple request. "I do not think I need ask you to keep silence about what has happened to-night."

"I think not," he answered gravely.

"Thank you," and she gave him her hand.

The mother turned from the gate with a heavy heart, and went back to the sitting-room. Dolores was not there, and slowly, painfully, Mrs. Power ascended the stairs and went into the little bed-room.

Dolores looked up with great frightened eyes, which the mother seeing, cried out, "Oh, child, are you so afraid of me?" and taking the little trembling form to her breast, she burst into a passion of tears.

"It is my fault—my fault!" she moaned.

"Oh! my poor little child!"

And thus the two wept together, and for the first and last time in her life Dolores

knew the greatness of a mother's love—the mother whom she had thought so cold and stern. For she knew not how that rigid exterior was but as the crust of ice that an intense cold has made over a deep stream, while the water still flows swift and strong beneath.

The next morning, when Marcelline went to call her mistress, she found her quite cold and dead. She had not been to bed. On her writing-table were two letters—one unfinished.

Marcelline could hardly believe she was dead. She rushed hastily to Pierre, and sent him off for the doctor. He came at once—a kind-hearted little man, who had been called in by Mrs. Power once or twice when she had been seriously ill before.

“Ah! ah!” he said, nodding his head shrewdly, “poor lady! poor lady! As I thought—the heart! Some emotion, some violent emotion! What is this?—what is this?” And he put on his spectacles and

looked at the writing, but he could make nothing of it, for he did not understand a dozen words of English. "And little Miss, does she know?"

Marcelline wrung her hands.

"Poor babe! poor lamb! poor angel!—no! She still sleeps, and I have not the heart to wake her."

"She has some friends, *hein*—somewhere in England?"

"I know not. It may be in this letter." And Marcelline mournfully indicated the sheet of paper lying on the *escritoire*.

"She ought to be got out of the house until all this sad business is over. And then her friends must be written to. Who will do all this? Surely she knows some one English person here in Rouen."

"Not a single one, except—ah! except——" And Marcelline bethought her of the kind, grave-looking Englishman, who had brought back her child after her second flight. "There is a gentleman who

lives in the *Campagne* close by, with his sister, but she has only spoken just a few words with him."

"Ah!" responded the little doctor, "I know. A tall, melancholy man, with the spleen—very English, and a nice amiable little lady—very English too, but no spleen. I attended her for *migraine* last week. In an hour I shall go to her, and speak of poor little Miss. She is good, I know—she will interest herself."

And, true to his word, the kind little man betook himself to Miss Etherege, told her the story, and entreated her kind offices for her poor forlorn little *compatriote*. She put on her bonnet, and went at once to Dolores, whom she found stricken with grief and terror, entreating to be allowed to see her mother, whom she had killed by her wicked conduct. At first she shrank from the sight of a stranger, but Mary Etherege was so tender, so refined, so sympathetic, that in a very short time the child

was won over, and clung gratefully to her new friend. And she shrank, as all young things do, from the terrible presence of death, and when Miss Etherege proposed to take her to her own home for a day or two, and Marcelline affectionately urged her to accept the invitation so heartily given, she acquiesced.

Often she wondered afterwards what would have become of her if Philip and Mary Etherege had not been sent to her at this time—she so childish and ignorant of all worldly affairs, and Marcelline equally helpless. As it was, they arranged everything for her—she had no care but the sorrow of losing her mother; and after the first shock, that loss was not so grievous—they had been so little to each other.

When they arrived at the *Campagne*, Mary Etherege put two papers into her hand.

“These must be for you to read, my

dear," she said gently—"they were on your poor Mamma's writing-table."

With trembling hands and dim eyes, Dolores took them and read thus :—

"MY DEAR CHILD,

"I have too long delayed this task—pray God give me strength to complete it to-night, for I feel my days are numbered ; and but for your sake, my poor child, to whom I fear I have so imperfectly filled a mother's place, how gladly would I go home to rest ! Rest !—oh ! child, how I have prayed for you this night on my knees, that you may never know that awful heartsick weariness that makes the most perfect thought of Heaven—rest ! My heart aches for you, to think, child as you are, that you have suffered already—suffered when you ought to know nothing but joy and laughter ; and I feel sore self-reproach to think that my own grief has made me too little careful of your welfare.

But you always seemed to me so thoughtless, so frivolous, so devoid of all deep feeling, that no thoughts save for your immediate bodily welfare ever troubled me.

“I have so little strength, I must come quickly to the important part of what I have to write you. Your father’s name I cannot tell you, though I am his lawful wife, and you his lawful child, though he still lives, and is a man of name and position in the world. I sacrifice you as I sacrificed myself, as I would sacrifice ten lives, ten children, if he asked it of me; so, my poor little one, I pray your forgiveness, for you owe me nothing but reproach. And yet do not think harshly of me. I have suffered so terribly these fifteen years, and, as God is my witness, for no fault of mine. When I am dead, what little I have will belong to you. You need not be dependent on anyone, since you will always have two hundred and fifty pounds a year, the



principal of which is invested in the English Funds. The name and address of my lawyer you will find in my desk. I am getting so weak, I must break off my letter to write another—to a friend who was dear to me twenty years ago. I shall commend you to her care. If I live I will add more to this letter at another time ; if not——”

There the letter ended. The other sheet of paper contained only these few words :—

“ MY DEAR CAROLINE,

“ You know what friends we were in the old days—you cannot have forgotten all the faithful promises we made each other when we were girls together. It is twenty years, or very nearly, since you saw or heard of me, but I know all about you—where you live, how many children you have—for I took great pains to find you out when I was in England a month ago. You have had a smooth and

happy life, and I—but never mind, it is nearly over—will be quite over when you read this. Oh! Carry, for the sake of our old love, be good to my child!”

And that was all—no address, no clue of any kind.

Captain Etherege wrote to the lawyer, but he could give no information of any kind, as he had only managed a few unimportant affairs for Mrs. Power, and that only within the last five years. Mary suggested advertising in the English papers, but as there was no doubt Power was only a feigned name, and Dolores’ father was evidently interested in ignoring her, Philip thought such a measure useless.

What was to be done with her? was the vexed question that constantly presented itself to the minds of brother and sister.

## CHAPTER III.

## IN DAYS GONE BY.

TWO months passed, and at the end of them Dolores was beginning to be a little more like her old self. There was many an hour during which she sat listless and sorrowful ; there were still sometimes traces of tears on her soft cheeks, but she did laugh now and then, and there was occasionally a ring of the old blitheness in her sweet voice. We *must* forget in time, or, at all events, become less sensitive to our bitter sorrows, thank God ! only let the days, and weeks, and months come to an end, and they will find (even after the cruelest suffering) some of us resigned,

some stultified, some utterly oblivious.

“Two gifts, perforce, we have given us yet,  
Though sad things stay and glad things fly—  
Two gifts we have given us—to forget  
All glad and sad things that go by,  
And then to die.”

Most of us want to die at first, when we are so wretched—ah! so wretched!—that the most cruel thought is the thought of a long life. But then, some time, the bitter dark days pass, and we come out again into the sunlight, and we can thank God then for not having listened to the impatient prayer of our sorrow. So Dolores, having little to remind her of her grief, began gradually to think less of it, and to see the sprouting green shoots of an oasis in what had seemed to her poor little weeping eyes one great desert of scorching sand. The silver that had begun to line her dark cloud was the constant presence and companionship of Captain Etherege and his sister.

Dolores still lived with Marcelline in the

little white house. Miss Etherege had tried to persuade her to go to England, where she would seek out some kind, pleasant people to take care of her; but the girl set herself resolutely against this project.

"No, no, no!" she answered, decisively. "I will go on living here—at all events, so long as you, my two kind friends, are here. What should I do in cold, miserable England, where I know no one?"

Marcelline was more than a mother to her—mother, friend, devoted slave, all in one; and the two had a pleasant sense of freedom, now that the first shock of Mrs. Power's death was over. No one to fear, no one to tremble at, no one to consider, no one to obey. All day and every day Dolores spent with her new friends. They planned little excursions to amuse and distract her mind; they had books and pictures to show her; they took her walks and drives, and never seemed weary of having

her with them. What she cared most for was to sit in the twilight, on a low stool near the open window, and hear Captain Etherege tell of the foreign countries he had visited, and all the anecdotes and incidents of his life that he could remember. When he discovered that she cared to hear of these things, how he racked his brain to think of them!—what efforts he made to rouse himself from his natural shyness! His sister, sitting in the far corner, that the remembrance of her presence might not disturb him, smiled to herself a little sadly, and thought, somehow, of Othello and Desdemona, as she saw the girl's rapt eyes fixed on his grave, deep-lined face.

And all this time the child was twining herself round Philip Etherege's world-worn heart—twining so tight, so tight, it pained him many a time, and wrung great sighs from him.

“How could I ever hope she would care even a little for me?” he said, sadly—“such

a tender blossom, and I so old and care-worn! Yes, I am an old man compared with her; and I look ten years older even than I am. Forty and seventeen!—the disparity is horrible to think of!” And he whispered to himself Shakespeare’s verses—

“ ‘Crabbed age and youth  
Cannot live together;  
Youth is full of pleasance,  
Age is full of care.

Age, I do abhor thee,  
Youth, I do adore thee;  
O, my love, my love is young!’

“I daresay she thinks of me as some quite old man, too old even to remember the warm feelings of youth. Oh! if she only knew how fresh and keen my heart is still—just as capable of loving as when it was twenty years younger! And, even if it was not for that, could I dare to join her young life to my miserable, disgraced one? Though she has no name, no parents, no friends, could I dare to take advantage of

that? Ah, how little I thought ever to love or want to trust a woman again!"

Then he wondered to himself what could be that secret in her life, so terrible, so bitter, that should have made her want to hide herself away from the scorn that followed it—hide herself even in death.

"Did she love some man very dearly in her sweet innocent heart, and did he deceive her? If I could find the blackguard out—" and a sudden passion made the hot blood flush into his cheeks. Then his head drooped upon his arms, and a strange passing bitterness made his strong frame heave and tremble.

Presently he leans back in his chair, and sits staring, with deep, intent eyes, at the burning logs. Looking into the fitful blaze, this is what he sees:

A room wherein the light of a Midsummer evening is waning, but there is yet no darkness; everything, even into the dimmest corner, stands out in bold relief.



Reclining nonchalantly in a low chair is a fair woman, pretty in feature, but almost repulsive in expression at this moment. The picture is well engraved on his mind, even to the shimmering satin, the cloudy lace, that lay in folds round her *svelte* figure ; even to the jewels that deck her ears, her breast, and arms. There leans against the chimney-piece a man, whose face is dark with pain and anger, in whose eyes there is the strangest mingling of wrath and pity. That man is himself.

His mind takes a leap further back ; as in dreams where, in a moment, one seems to live through long spaces of time, he goes through the past years of his life. In the young days he has been wild, lived hard, as most men in the service have,—more, perhaps, from idleness and *ennui* than from any especial pre-disposition to or love for vice. There is some folly, some sin, much wasted time to recall, but no disgrace, no stain of dishonour,

—nothing that, in the eyes of the world, tarnishes a man's fair fame. And from the moment that he knew this woman, his life has been a page open and fair to all who might choose to read. She was young, girlish, pretty, and he loved her dearly—nay, with all his heart,—and they were married. She travelled about with him, wherever his regiment was ordered. He put no restraint upon her; she might dance and laugh with whom she chose. He did not suspect her—was only glad that she should be admired and happy. He was not a rich man, but he could afford to gratify many of her extravagant tastes. What he had he gave lovingly, ungrudgingly. A year passed; she grew cold to him. If it had been only that!—hard as that is for one who loves to bear—but there were rumours—rumours that, at last, even he could not help hearing. He sent in his papers at once. She cried, implored, entreated. In answer he uttered not

one word of suspicion or reproach, but on the subject of leaving the Army he was inexorable. They went to live in London. He, a sportsman, fond of all country pursuits, abhorred it ; but he said to himself,

“What right have I to make her miserable by shutting her up in the country ? If I condemn her to a dull life after what she has been used to, it will be my fault if she is driven to deceive me.”

So he took a house in London, lived a life he hated, went with her to balls, theatres, dinners ; rode and drove with her, gratified all her whims, so far as he could, and begrudged not the sacrifice, for he loved her dearly. And she was dissatisfied—wretched. She could not tear herself away from the life that did not satisfy her. It mortified her every day to see women richer, better dressed, more admired than herself. Why should not she have stepping horses, and diamonds, and half-a-dozen men of fashion at her beck

and call? She girded more bitterly at the hardness of her fate than the beggar who knows not where to look for his next meal. The man who loved her unselfishly was sorry for her. He read her heart, but did not despise her for what he found there; he only said,

“Poor little girl! she should have married a man with ten thousand a year!”

As she grew daily colder and more indifferent to him, impatient of all he said or did, more exacting the more he sacrificed, she became more anxious for the flattery and admiration of other men. Her flirtations were so *prononcé* that her own sex began to draw aside from her; still her husband shielded her, made excuses for her; no one ever heard him say one harsh or bitter word of her—not the women who knew him best could wring one word from him to her disparagement. Once a servant hinted to him something against her mistress; he turned her from the house

there and then—he could not, would not see.

A time came when it was impossible to shut his eyes any more ; he left her, half mad with agony, and went straight to his lawyer. Why didn't he kill the man ? Yes, if it had been one. A month passed—a month of awful sickening pain, in which, after his first fury against her, he said to himself, " Shall I leave her to infamy and disgrace, to a horror worse than death?—shall I drive her deeper into the abyss than she is already ? What is my life worth to me?—what future have I to look forward to?—how can I hold up my head again in the world ? Shall I not try to save her ? Perhaps she has suffered bitterly ; her punishment may already be enough."

I know not what visions he sees of the long golden hair trailing in the dust ; of the eyelids red with weeping ; of the fair face distorted by shame and sorrow, as he

turns his steps to that house that he has once called home. The servant who opens the door looks strangely at him, in doubt whether to admit him. He solves the difficulty by pushing past her, and going up into the drawing-room. It is empty.

"Tell your mistress I am here," he says hoarsely, and the girl leaves him alone.

A sickening feeling of expectation comes over him. Will she see him?—will she come and throw herself at his feet? Then—then he will take her in his arms and forgive her, and they will go away together out of England until the world has forgotten, and——Oh! how the minutes drag themselves out! Will she never come? She need not fear so to meet him.

The handle of the door turns somewhat sharply; there is a rustling, trailing sound of silk, and there stands before him no penitent Magdalen, but a woman haughty and bold of mien, with painted eyes, magnificently dressed, with diamonds glittering

in her ears and on her breast. "Well, what do you want of me?"

The hopes that have been growing and gathering in his breast are dispelled with one bitter wrench; he stands staring at her, not knowing what to say. This is a phase he has not contemplated.

"I did not think to find you like this," he says bitterly, after a moment.

"No?" she utters indifferently, sailing gracefully into a chair. "I am going to the opera."

"To the opera!" he echoes harshly. "Have you, then, fallen so low that you can flaunt your shame openly before the world?"

"If you came for the pleasure of insulting me," she answers coldly, "I must decline to hear any more; recriminations are not amusing, and I suppose our lawyers can settle all there is to settle."

"For God's sake!" he cries hoarsely, "don't talk like that. Are you destitute of

every spark of better feeling? Listen, this is what I came for. I came, hoping to find some remorse in your heart. I came to say to you, 'If you have repented, if from to-day you will swear to me to lead a new life, I will take you back to me; not to my love, not to my heart, but to my name—my hearth and home, from shame and disgrace—and we will go together to some place where no one knows us, where no one can reproach you, where——'"

"*Grand merci!*" she interrupts scornfully, "your offer is too magnanimous, the picture you draw too tempting. Thanks very much, but I have other views."

His heart is full of wrath and bitterness, but he cannot see this woman who has lain on his breast, whom he has loved so dearly, go headlong to her own perdition.

"Have you no pity for yourself?" he says, presently; words seem slow in coming to him—the words he wants.

"No," she answers icily, "none at all. I



am sorry for you. I suppose you find you can't live without me. I don't doubt this moment you would take me back on my own terms if I chose; but I don't choose."

He stands staring at her. Is this creature, fair to look upon, bright-eyed, red-lipped, soft-skinned, a woman?—a helpmate for man, to be his comfort, his consolation, his pleasure?—the one bright spot given to a man to cheer his dreary pilgrimage?—or is it some mocking devil permitted by an infernal agency to go about for his misery and destruction?

"What do you mean to do?" The words came harsh and dry from his parched throat.

"When we are divorced, I am going to marry a man with ten thousand a year, or very near it. You know you always said that was what I ought to have had. He will be here directly—you had better go."

A sudden fury comes over him—he

makes a step towards her—a very devil kindling in his flaming eyes.

She looks at him calmly.

“Are you going to strangle me?” she asks, looking at him with eyes that never blench.

He falls back again, an awful coldness creeping over him—the horror is so intense it benumbs him—he tries to steady himself against the chimney-piece. As if in a dream he hears the bell ring—sees her rise and go away. A moment later he hears a man’s voice, with which hers mingles laughing. In an instant he dashes towards the door, his very soul filled with murderous rage; his foot catches in the *portière*, and he falls heavily, striking his head. For a moment he lies stunned; then, as he essays to rise, he hears the street door close, and a carriage drive away. Mechanically he goes down the stairs, takes his hat and leaves the house. His head swims, he is not aware of anything

passing him, until a man touches his arm and says,

“Hadn’t you better get into a cab and go home, sir? Your head seems to be bleeding very bad.”

Then he is conscious that people are staring at him, and that the side of his face is covered with blood.

“Thank you,” he says; and the man calls a cab and puts him into it.

“Where to, sir?”

His memory seems to have left him; he cannot for the life of him remember the name of his hotel. He stares vaguely at his Samaritan friend.

“Perhaps you’ve got a card or an envelope about you, sir?”

He pulls half a dozen letters from his pocket; the address is the same on all, so the man directs the cabman where to drive. Somehow he gets to his room, and throws himself on the bed. All through the night,

as he tosses to and fro, his lips can frame but one sentence—

“O God! and I loved that woman!”

Captain Etherege sees all this in the logs that blaze and crackle. Time has worn off the keenness of the sting; but the memory is still bitter. Degraded, disgraced, his name stained, and for no fault or sin of his! If he loved, ay, so much, could he offer that name to another woman?

It is two years since all this happened. After the divorce he went to America, and for twelve months led a roving life, finding what diversion he might in the wildest adventures, the most dangerous sports. He hated the thought of England; he would rather have gone into the wildest, loneliest haunts of Indians than face London, his friends, his club. If he had been the guiltiest creature on God's earth—if the mark of Cain had been branded on his

brow—he could not have more dreaded to meet those of his fellow-men who knew him and his history. So he travelled about the Continent, and finally landed at Rouen, which took his fancy vastly. Thence he wrote to his eldest and only unmarried sister.

“MY DEAR MARY,

“If you can be spared for a little time from your nephews and nieces—that is to say, if you are not nursing any of the different tribes through measles, scarlatina, or whooping-cough—come and spend a month or two with me in this quaint old city. Now you’ve taken to writing, you’ll find no end of interesting old places and people here to scribble about; and you will have the comfort of knowing you’re doing a most charitable action, for I am getting utterly heartsick for sight of a face I know, and I don’t think any other would do me so much

good as your dear old cheery one. What do you say ? Will you come ?”

Mary Etherege’s answer was to come straight off, as soon as she had packed her wardrobe and foolscap.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A CONFESSION.

MARCELLINE, whose heart was bound up in Dolores—who had no other thought or wish, morning, noon, and night, but the welfare of her little one, who had run such grievous risks and dangers—Marcelline was not long in discovering that Captain Etherege loved her. The more she considered the subject, the more puzzled grew her brain. Thus her reflections ran :

“He loves the little one, that is certain, perhaps even without knowing it. How he watches to see her smile—to see her pleased! What pains he takes to satisfy

her least caprice ! And when she looks happy, there comes into his eyes—ah ! those beautiful eyes, that are like the pictures of the blessed Saint Jean—a tenderness that almost brings the tears into my eyes, old fool that I am ! He is too old, without doubt, for the little one ; but ah ! how good he would be to her !—and is not that a thousand times more to be desired than the quickly-ended passion of a young man, with whom it is a fashion to be capricious, and to desire every pretty face he sees. Still she is so young, the little one—so young and tender. It is not a father she wants. Sometimes they are happy, though, these marriages ; but I have heard they are not approved among the English. May the good God watch over her !” finished up Marcelline, “and send her happiness !”

Dolores was not ignorant of the love she inspired. Those who themselves have loved become quick in detecting the master



passion in others, and so the girl soon came to know that Captain Etherege cared for her. She had no feeling for him beyond a certain pleasure in his society, and in hearing him talk—a restful consciousness of protection in his presence, and a grateful remembrance that he had brought light across the dulness and dimness of her life; yet she was glad he loved her—glad to think she could inspire strong feeling in some heart, and with the unfairness of an unreasoning child, she took a secret pleasure in fostering the passion which she had no thought of returning. But it raised no hopes in him; he did not even give her credit for guessing at his real feelings; and as for Mary Etherege, the kindest, best creature in the world, there was so little sentiment in her nature, and she was so unskilled in reading others, that she had not any real consciousness of what her brother felt and Dolores knew. She was rendered additionally blind by the

fact of having her mind concentrated on writing; and though sometimes vague thoughts about the two would flit across her brain, they took no definite shape.

One Autumn evening, Captain Etherege, his sister, and Dolores, were sitting over a cheery wood fire in the cosy little salon. There was no light but the flame of the blazing logs, which threw a warm, ruddy glow over the faces of the three; but it was light enough to tell stories by, and Captain Etherege was telling one entranced auditor, at least, the story of the *Endymion* and her gallant crew, who, at the risk of being stranded on the reefs themselves, saved seven hundred of their French foes from a horrible death.

“And then,” he finished, his face all aglow with honest pride at the remembrance of what British tars had done—“then, when the *Endymion* had hauled them off the rocks, and got into fair water again herself, the Frenchmen tumbled into

the rigging, and cheered our men like mad, until the sound was heard far above the howling of the wind and the roar of the waves; and then they set sail, and went to tell the story of their noble foes, and you may depend after that they never thought of our British tars without a tender spot in their hearts somewhere for them."

Dolores was leaning forward, her hands clasped, the tears standing in her eager eyes.

"Ah! that was noble!" she said, her voice so tremulous she could hardly speak.

"Yes," Captain Etherege answered. "That story always stirred my blood more than any other. I think I would rather have been in the *Endymion* that time, almost, than have fought by Nelson's side at Trafalgar."

At this juncture Mary Etherege slipped away into the dining-room to fetch some

work. After she was gone, her brother and Dolores sat for some time looking into the fire without speaking. Presently Captain Etherege glanced at his companion. The firelight flickered over her peach-like face and round, white throat; it warmed her rich brown hair, and shone upon her sweet blue eyes.

"I know what you remind me of," he said, suddenly. "It has often puzzled me, but I remember now; you are like Greuze's picture in the Louvre."

Dolores gave one startled glance at him, and then burst into tears.

"My dear child, what have I said?" cried Philip Etherege, quite distressed. "I would not pain you for the world!"

But Dolores said nothing, only let the great glistening tears rain through her slender hands.

"Dolores, dear child, don't cry," he said, kneeling down beside her and putting his arm round her; "you make me wretched."

"It is nothing," she sobbed, drawing herself away.

He sat down again with a sigh, and remained silently looking into the fire until she left off crying, and removed her hands from her face. Then he took one of them tenderly in his, and when she essayed to draw it from him, he said gently,

"Don't take it away, child ; I would not do anything to vex you ;" and she let it remain.

"What made you cry, dear ?" he asked, presently. "Was it something I said ?"

"It was about the picture," Dolores answered, looking ready to cry again.

"We will not speak of it, then, if it pains you."

"If it had not been for that picture," cried Dolores, impetuously, "I should never have been so miserable—so miserable as I am now."

"Are you still so miserable ?" Captain Etherege asked, in a sad voice.

"I shall never be anything but miserable."

"Oh! child, don't say that," he cried, in a quick, uncertain voice. "You who are so young, with life and love before you, to talk like that!"

"Not love," she answered, bitterly; "that is over."

Philip Etherege could almost have smiled, if he had not felt so sad.

"Do you know, dear," he said, giving utterance to what he had, a little while before, been firmly resolved never to betray,—"do you know I love you, with all my heart—that I would do, or sacrifice anything in this world for the hope that you might be mine! I don't tell you this because I think or believe for one instant it would ever make you think of me otherwise than you do now—as a man, old and grey,—a man who could never be anything to you but a friend, or an adviser. I feel all that, dear child, keenly, painfully

enough ; but I tell it you just to prove to you that, if you can revive a love in me that I thought no woman living could re-kindle, it makes it doubly sure that many another man will love you, for your beautiful face and your dear, sweet ways. And then, dear, when some one comes who is worthy of you, who has youth and love and all you value to give you, life will seem very different in your eyes from what it does to-day. Seventeen, and life and love finished ! Ah ! my little one, you have tasted neither yet."

" I have," she cried passionately ; " you do not know anything." Then she remembered what he had said about loving her, and she caught away her hand quickly.

" If you knew," she said, the deep red flushing in her cheeks, and her voice faltering,— " if you knew, you would not love me, you would despise me."

" I !" he exclaimed, in a tone of tender incredulity.

"Yes, you. Ah! you do not know how foolish and wicked I have been."

"Foolish, perhaps," he answered, regaining the little hand, and kissing it tenderly; "we are all foolish sometime in our lives, but wicked—no, dear, don't ask me to believe that. I hardly think you know what actual wickedness means; you have committed some trifling wrong, perhaps, and it seems a fearful enormity to your innocent eyes."

"If I were to tell you——"

"Don't tell me, dear child. I trust you. I seek to know nothing;" and so, in his generosity, he put aside the curiosity that had tormented him, waking and sleeping, for two months.

"I *will* tell you," she said, resolutely. "But you will still be kind and good to me, even if you despise me. You will not betray me to anyone, will you?"

There were some noble chords in Dolores's nature, and her sorrow had



struck music from them, and made her something far sweeter, higher, worthier than the frivolous child it found her.

"Don't tell me," said Philip Etherege, again.

"I must tell you, because I want you not to love me," she answered, her sweet voice trembling. "It is so terrible to love, when the love is not returned."

"Yes," he answered mechanically, with a deep sigh.

Dolores went on :

"In the Spring, Mamma went away to England, and Marcelline and I were left alone up at the house. One day a stranger saw me picking apple-blossoms, and he desired to paint me, because I was like a picture in the Louvre. So he asked Marcelline, and it was so very, very dull and quiet up there, she thought it would please me, and consented. He came several times to make my picture, and I—oh, Captain Etherege, it seems so bold, so immodest

to tell you I loved him, hardly even knowing that I loved him." And Dolores stopped a moment, because her voice was choked with tears.

"Poor little child!" said Philip, his own eyes wet with pity, and he kissed the little hand again.

"You will not want to do that when I have told you all," uttered Dolores, sadly; but he only clasped it the tighter.

"He was a grand English gentleman; he was very kind and good to me, but he never ever guessed I should be foolish enough to love him. Then he had to go away suddenly; he sent me a letter, and I thought my heart would have broken. Oh, if you knew what it is to feel that misery of being away out of sight of some one who is all your life to you, with the thought that you will never see them again, you will not want to love."

Captain Etherege listened as if in a dream. To hear this little girl warn him

of sufferings that had embittered the last years of his life, it was so passing strange, it bewildered him into silence.

"For three days," she went on, "I was almost mad with misery; then the fourth, I—I could not bear it, and I followed him to Paris."

"Good God!" cried Philip in sudden agony, dropping her hand.

"Yes," she said, shrinking back, "I knew you would hate and despise me."

"Oh child, go on!" he cried, catching it again, and grasping it so hard it pained her,—“go on, tell me all, for God's sake!”

She snatched her hand away, and burst into tears, while he sat devouring her face with fierce, strange, miserable eyes.

"Don't keep me in this suspense!" he said, in a voice so unlike his own that the girl looked up, startled.

"I found him, and he brought me back home," she faltered. And then there was

a long silence. Captain Etherege was the first to break it.

"Did you want to stay with him, child?"

"Yes," she answered, in a low voice, hiding her face in her hands. "I implored him to let me stay; I said I would be his servant—anything, only to be with him."

"And what answer did he make?"

"He said I knew not what I asked."

"Have you ever seen him since?"

"He stayed two days longer in Rouen. I have never seen him since."

"And your mother—did she know?"

"Never until that first day I saw you down by the Quai. I was on the threshold, I heard Marcelline tell her, and I ran away blindly in my shame and terror. Now you know all, and you will never be my friend any more, perhaps."

He only kissed her hands passionately for answer.

"We cannot give love and take it back," he said. "No, child; I love you with all

my heart. I believe you as pure and innocent as any woman breathing; and I would hold it the dearest blessing God could give me to shield your dear life from harm and sorrow. Oh, my darling, could you not love me a little—ever so little?”

But tears were his only answer.

## CHAPTER V.

## A LETTER.

DOLORÉS lay awake all that night thinking of what had happened to her, and hardly knowing whether to be glad or sorry. She was not ashamed of having told the honest truth to the man who loved her; it was only fair and just that he should know, she said to herself. And he must love her dearly. Was it not strong proof that he remained unchanged, even after the disclosure which had been so painful and shameful to her? But she did not love him—not as she understood the meaning of love—not with that wild worship she had known for Guy.

He would protect and shelter and be good to her, and she felt rest and trust in him—that was all. The thought that he was too old never occurred to her; he had seemed as young as Guy when he sat with her over the firelight kissing her hands.

“How I wish I could love him!” she said to herself a thousand times. “I might be so happy with him if I could forget Sir Guy. Would *he* be sorry if I married some one else? No, I think not; he never cared for me;” and then she turned her face to her pillow and cried. “If it were possible,” she thought again, “that some day we might meet, and he should think more of me, and then it was too late.”

And after thinking a long, long time, she resolved to write to Guy, and tell him, and ask his advice. The next day she wrote him this letter:—

“DEAR SIR GUY,—Once you told me, if I wanted help or counsel, to write to you.

I cling still to the remembrance of your kindness, though you, perhaps, have forgotten it, and almost me. Someone who is very good and generous has offered me his love. I have told him all my foolishness that I was guilty of to you, and he pardons it. I do not love him as—as I could wish; but, since he is so good to me, and cares so for me, should I, who can never love again, refuse so much devotion? I ask you; you will advise, will you not?

“Your little friend and sister,

“DOLORES.”

With her own hands she posted the letter, and waited day by day for the answer. But it never came; and at last she was forced to say, in the bitterness of her heart,

“He has forgotten me utterly; he will not even give himself the trouble to write me one line.” Then pride came to her



rescue. "It is mean and pitiful in me," she said, with kindling eyes, "to treasure in my heart such love for a man who has no thought of me! I will never think of him any more." And so she tried to banish him from her memory, and was all the happier for the effort.

She began to take more interest in her life; to be glad when she was with Captain Etherege, to be sorry when he left her, and to feel that he was the mainspring of her new existence, making it all smooth and pleasant to her.

As for Philip, since that evening when he had been overcome into betraying his love for her, he had never alluded to it again. She knew now what his feelings were; should she ever have the dawn of some warmer, kindlier thought of him, it would be for her to show it. Over and over again he thought of the story she had so frankly confessed to him; and, bitter as the recollection was, it seemed, in one

sense, to bring her nearer to him. If her past had been unclouded, if she had a future such as most young girls have to look forward to, would she not be utterly, hopelessly out of reach of him?—of what little he had to offer? But now there was this dark page in her life, which she herself was so bitterly ashamed of, might he not offer his heart, his love, and his name, to shield her—as far as it is given to one mortal to shield another—from so much of pain and suffering? But it gave him a horrible pang to think of this little tender child having been at the mercy of another man. He would not doubt her.

“If she were not spotless and innocent,” he reasoned to himself, “she would never have made such a confession. Though she talks so bitterly of her wickedness and folly, I would stake my life she is ignorant of the construction the world would put on her words. Oh! if that—— No, he must be an honourable man, though I

feel so bitter against him. If she had never seen him, and could have given me half of that passionate worship her poor, lavish little heart wasted on him, how happy I might have been once again! Even as it is, I feel it would be almost happiness to be able to protect her from all external harm and suffering. What is to become of the child, living here without society and companionship, having no one but Marcelline? She seems a good, sensible creature, and I am sure she loves the child; but what an existence for a young girl who should be just beginning life with a host of joyous anticipations!"

As a rule, Captain Etherege told his sister everything that concerned him, sure of her loving, sisterly affection; but on the subject of Dolores he was silent, and told her nothing.

One morning a letter came from an old friend. He was in delicate health, was going to the south of France for the Win-

ter, and being obliged to remain a few days in Paris, had written to ask Captain Etherege to join him there.

"I am quite alone," he wrote, "and feel very wretched and nervous about myself. My brother is to join me in a few days, but meantime I am so hippered and dull, my life is a burden. For the sake of old times, do, like a good fellow, take pity upon me, and if you can spare a week from that exciting place in which you are at present stagnating, you will earn my eternal gratitude."

Unable to resist such an appeal, Philip had his portmanteau packed, and went off by the afternoon train. Dolores ran in to pay her accustomed visit a few minutes after his departure.

"Philip left all kinds of messages for you," said Mary Etherege—"he has gone to Paris."

"To Paris!" repeated Dolores, her face falling visibly.

"Yes, dear, for a week; so you must take pity on me, and give me a good deal of your company the next few days. I daresay the change will do him good, poor fellow. I am afraid he finds this place dull, but he is so kind and good, he would never say so, because he knows I enjoy being here."

"I need not have been unhappy about his caring too much for me," sighed Dolores to herself. "I don't believe men know what it is to love really."

"Philip's has been a sad life," Miss Etherege went on presently. "Did you know he had been married, Dolores?"

"No," she answered, starting.

"It is a very sad story—I hate to talk about it, but somehow I fancy he wants you to know."

"And did his wife die?" asked Dolores, solemnly.

"No."

There was a pause. Mary Etherege

fidgeted about a little, and arranged the things on her writing-table.

"I hate to talk about it," she repeats presently, almost irritably for her. "She was a bad, wicked woman, and God forgive me, but I cannot forgive her."

Turning, she sees Dolores' eyes fixed wonderingly upon her.

"It is so difficult to tell a little innocent creature like you," she pursues. "I dare-say you never even heard the word divorce?"

Dolores shakes her head. Mary Etherege feels a great difficulty in continuing her narrative.

"Well," she says at last, "when people are married, and one is untrue to the other, they can be separated by law—that is called being divorced. It means the marriage is annulled—the husband and wife are no more to each other than if they had never been married."

"And was some one once untrue to

Philip—to Captain Etherege, I mean?” and the girl blushes.

“Yes,” replies the sister bitterly; “and yet he was the kindest, the most indulgent husband in the world.”

“Is it long ago?”

“More than two years, and until he saw you, he could never bear to speak to a woman. I think you have cured him of that.”

“Oh!” and Dolores heaves a deep sigh.

She went home with a new interest in Captain Etherege, saying to herself, “We have both had our sorrows, we should not expect too much of each other; we can neither of us love any more.” Old reasoning for such a child; but sorrow soon makes the heart old. And the days that he was away seemed so long and dreary, she felt as if it was quite impossible to go back to the old life without him. If he went away for a few months, what a great miserable blank there would be again!

Would it not be better to make sure of having him always near her? And now that he was away, and she missed him so much, she began to think she loved him. She longed for him to come back, she counted the hours until the week should be over, and the more she doubted if he really cared for her, the more she felt drawn towards him.

Then when he did come back, as she and Mary Etherege were sitting together over the firelight, when she saw his kind eyes looking gladly into hers, when she heard the sound of his voice, and felt the loving pressure of his hand, she was almost happy, and said to herself, "Yes, I know I shall love him." A little later, when Mary Etherege was out of the room, Dolores put one hand shyly on his, and said,

"I am so glad you have come back. It seemed quite dull and changed without you."



"Are you glad—really glad, child?" he asked, quickly turning to her.

"Yes, really."

He was silent for a moment, and then he said,

"Have you ever thought, while I have been away, of what I once said to you?"

"Yes."

"Has Mary told you about—about my past life? Tell me, child, will you have my love?"

"Yes," she answered, simply.

"Darling," he said, hardly satisfied, "are you quite sure in your own mind? Don't take me out of pity. I would rather never see your dear face again than think you might some day regret what you had done."

"I shall not regret," she answered in a low voice. "We have both been sad, you and I; we shall not expect too much from each other."

He kissed her a little sadly, and she

felt a tranquil content that was not love, and yet was a sort of happiness. It was a strange wooing and acceptance for a girl of seventeen, was it not? So it was settled that Captain Etherege and Dolores were to marry each other. His sister was surprised, but very glad, and Marcelline was divided between exuberant pleasure and anxious doubts. They were not to be married just yet, it was decided—Dolores was so young, and Philip was too diffident and uncertain of her feelings to wish to hasten the marriage. Before she had consented to be his wife, he had believed it would be sufficient happiness only to have her—now he had the most ardent desire that she should love him, not lukewarmly, as he felt she did, but dearly, passionately, as she had loved that other man. Oh, how the recollection of him rankled in Philip's heart!

A month passed, during which Dolores felt happier than she had ever been before,

except during the time of her fitful wild joy in the presence of Guy. Philip was so good, he provided a thousand pleasures for her; it was even arranged—oh, greatest happiness of all!—that he was to take her and his sister to Paris for a week. Dolores clapped her hands with a return of the old childish delight, and he began to feel more confident of ultimately winning her love.

“Ah, *mon Dieu*! what it is to be young and have rich lovers!” cried Marcelline one day with a beaming face, when Dolores showed her the diamond ring that Captain Etherege had given her, as the pledge of their engagement. “I told you once, little one, when you desponded, that some day good fortune would come to you, and see how the *bon Dieu* makes everything right. As for M. le Capitaine, he is an angel of goodness—he is like pictures of the blessed Saint Jean—he is the man, *par exemple*, to make a good husband. Ah! how much

better to have such a man as that, who is not young and giddy, and would not want to be always looking round for the pretty faces of other women, to break your heart."

Dolores did not answer. She was looking out thoughtfully at the cold Winter scene; and, when she turned, Marcelline saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"*Fi donc!* Mademoiselle," she cried briskly—"tears—why tears, I should wish to know? *Tiens!* look at these big frozen drops in your beautiful ring, like the fairy story of the little princess whose tears were turned into diamonds. That was well worth crying for, but yours are but poor worthless drops of salt water, that only make your pretty eyes red and sore. *Mon Dieu!* to cry because one has a rich, generous lover. Oh! what a silly child! And M. le Capitaine is a fine, handsome man, *bien entendu*," she rattled on.

"Marcelline," said the child sadly, put-

ting her arms round her faithful friend's neck, "I am not worthy of him, and that makes me miserable."

"La, la, la!" cried Marcelline, touched, but obstinately refusing to display any soft feeling, "what silly fancies are these? I'll answer he thinks you good enough. I daresay if one only knew, he is fretting because he thinks himself unworthy of you. So it is always with those foolish lovers who make so much of each other. They don't trouble their heads about not being good enough after the priest has once joined their hands."

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE REAL PICTURE.

THE day was fixed for the visit to Paris, and Dolores was in quite an excited state at the thought of it, when a summons came for Miss Etherege to go to one of her sisters, who was ill. When Dolores heard the news, her disappointment was so grievous, and she showed it so unmistakeably in her face, that Philip felt she should not and must not be thwarted.

“Molly!” he whispered, “why should not Dolores and I go to Paris, and take Marcelline with us for chaperon?”

Mary thought for a moment.

“I do not see any objection at all,” she answered, after a slight pause.

So it was decided; and when Dolores told Marcelline the news, she danced about the room with the childish gaiety of old times.

The faithful servant's heart throbbed with pleasure at sight of this unwonted merriment; her honest face beamed with delight, but she could not refrain from saying a little maliciously,

"*Tiens!* is this the demoiselle who wanted to be a nun—who was never going to be happy again all the days of her life?"

"Unkind Marcelline!" pouted the child.  
"Do you rail at me because I am happy?"

Marcelline's answer is to take the fair face between her brown hands, and imprint a sounding kiss upon each cheek. Then she trots off into the kitchen, where, in the exuberance of her delight, she cannot help confiding to Jeanneton the news of her impending visit to Paris. Is not Paris the El Dorado of every Frenchwoman, gentle or simple, young or old?

"Ah!" says Jeanneton, pausing in her

work, and looking enviously at Marcelline's triumphant face, "thou wilt see Paris, thou. Well, my girl, that will be a happy day for thee. And thou wilt see the gardens where I used to dance, and the houses where we supped afterwards (though they say many of them are pulled down), when I was the gayest grisette in all the Quartier. Ah! there are no more grisettes now like then. I remember, too, there were many English there; fine men they were, and generous. Oh yes, generous, I tell thee; the English always spend their money like water. They had a fancy for me too, but I liked the Frenchmen best. But, *dis donc*, Marcelline, if the little demoiselle marries this English capitaine, wilt thou go with her to England?"

"We shall see," replies Marcelline, nodding her head.

"Ah, poor girl!" cries Jeanneton with a spice of malice, holding up her hands, "then I pity thee in that *satané Angleterre*,



where they do nothing but eat raw biftecks and get tipsy all day. *Pauvres diables!* I suppose they are forced to it, or they would all hang themselves, through living in a weather as thick as *bouillon*."

"Ah! it is because thou knowest nothing better than thou throwest me those *niaiseries* at the nose," retorts Marcelline.

"Would the English be such a fine race, thinkest thou, if all one says of them were true? Does M. le Capitaine look as if he drank all day?"

"Ah! but he looks as if he had the spleen. If I were Mademoiselle, I would rather have married the Curé's brother, who used to come in the Spring. He was a fine, gay-looking gentleman, that!"

"*Peste! ma bonne,*" cries Marcelline, disconcerted. "I begin to think thee blind as well as deaf. The Curé's brother was not to be looked at beside M. le Capitaine."

"*Blind!*" echoes Jeanneton, angrily.  
"Thou wouldst have it, perhaps, that my

senses are failing me already! I wager there is not more than five years' difference between thee and me."

"*Diablo!*" exclaims the other, angrily, "what would the woman have! Thou art beautiful as an angel, young as a rose-bud, innocent as a dove. Does that satisfy thee?"

"*Mon Dieu!* but thou hast a temper," retorts Jeanneton. "However, I wish thee no worse than to go to that *satané Angleterre*."

Captain Etherege, Dolores, and Marcel-line were in Paris, and a very happy trio they made. It seemed like enchantment to the child as she drove in the Bois, wandered about the streets, contemplating, with wondering, wide-open eyes, the treasures displayed in the shops; or sat, with rapt attention, in the theatre, laughing and crying by turns, and calling on Marcelline, who sat, the picture of a discreet chaperon

in the back of the box, to sympathise with her ecstasy or horror.

To Philip it was like the glimpse of a new life to be with this gay creature—to watch her enthusiasm, her raptures, and to feel this bright young life would, in the happy future, that he almost trembled to think of, be made one with his. Yes, he trembled at this joy—it was so keen ; he could not, dared not believe it would last. Like those who have suffered—who know the duration of happiness can but be, ah ! so short—he tried to disarm Fate by forecasting sorrow ; he said constantly to himself it cannot last, hoping against hope that, because he put no faith in the future, it might for once be gentle to him.

On the fifth morning of their stay in Paris, as Dolores poured out the coffee for Captain Etherege, she looked at him timidly, saying, with her sweet little French accent,

“ Philippe.”

"Well, darling?"

"Will you take me to-day to the Louvre?"

"Will I?—of course I will!" and he looks at the dimpling, smiling face with a happy sense of how glad a thing it is, and will be, to gratify every wish of that tender little heart. "You are getting tired of the shops, I suppose, and want an intellectual treat?"

"I should never, *never* be tired of the shops," she replies, enthusiastically, "and I don't know anything about pictures, but—but——" and a rosy flush suffuses her face.

"Ah! I remember," interrupts Philip, a twinge passing through his heart at the recollection—"you want to see 'La Cruche Cassée?'"

Dolores answers by a little nod.

"So you shall," he responds heartily; "but," rising and going over to her, "the

little girl in the picture is not one fiftieth part as pretty as you."

He takes the small white face between his hands, and looks into the clear, pure depths of the violet eyes—to him, at least, it is a fairer face than limner's art can paint. He longs to kiss that little rosebud of a mouth, as he longs a hundred times every day, only he has a great dread of wearying and disgusting her; so he only strokes the bright hair tenderly, saying,

"When shall we start?"

"When you like—now, at once. I will run and make my toilette," and she trips off with great jubilation to Marcelline.

"My dear M. Philippe is going to take me to see my portrait!" she cries, bursting into the room, and flinging herself upon her nurse with an enthusiasm that causes the sturdy frame to sway to and fro.

"*Tiens!*" cries Marcelline, reprovingly—"what a madcap! A fine wife for a big, grave gentleman like M. le Capitaine!"

"Old crosspatch!" says the child, releasing her with a pout.

"Well, well—but what portrait?"

"Why, the picture that—that," and the blush re-appears—"that—oh! you know, Marcelline."

Marcelline looks grave, and shakes her head.

"What, dost thou think still of that nonsense?"

"Why should I not like to see the picture?" fires up Dolores. "I only want to know if it is like me."

"If it is only——" utters Marcelline, relenting.

"What else should it be?" angrily. "Am I not going to marry M. Etherege? What are all the other men in the world to me?"

"It might bring back thoughts," says discreet Marcelline.

"You are a silly old woman! If I were to see him twenty times over,"—with flash-

ing eyes—"I should not care for him again."

"That is well," says Marcelline, approvingly. "And now, my child, be quick and dress, that you may not keep M. le Capitaine waiting."

Half an hour later Dolores is traversing the long galleries of the Louvre, wonderingly, admiringly. Philip does not remember in what room the picture of their quest is situated, so they wander through a great many, and see a vast number of pictures, before they arrive at "La Cruche Cassée." Dolores has never been in a picture-gallery before, and wants to stand about half an hour in front of each picture that takes her fancy. She shivers with horror at "The Deluge," "The Shipwreck," "The Russian Campaign;" she is immensely disconcerted in the presence of Rubens's fat, indecent women, from which Philip hurries her away, and considerably bored by the productions of the ancient Masters.

"We have been here an hour and a half," says Philip, looking at his watch, "and have not found our picture yet. Suppose you ask one of the officials to direct us. I'm always ashamed of airing my bad French before you."

"Oh! but indeed you speak quite, *quite* well," returns Dolores, not adhering strictly to the truth, in her terror at the thought of addressing a strange and stern-looking individual; "and I——"

"Very well," says Philip. "If he cannot understand me you must help me out;" and without more ado he puts his question, with an air of assurance and composure that he is far from feeling, and receives the necessary directions.

"Here we are!" exclaims Captain Etherege, pulling up suddenly in front of the object of their search; "or, I suppose, I ought to say, 'Here *you* are!'"

Dolores stands and gazes, and Philip looks alternately from her to the picture,



and from the picture to her. His mind is soon made up.

"There is a look, certainly," he pronounces; "but," with great emphasis, "she isn't to be named in the same day with you. What do you say?" after a pause, as Dolores still continues to gaze.

But she does not hear him; her thoughts are far away—in the old garden under the apple-trees, where *he* saw her first—where *he* sat with her—where *he* painted her. Only a couple of hours ago she had told Marcelline that, were she to see him twenty times over, he would be nothing to her; and now she sees, hears, feels him in every nerve, as in those old days the picture has brought back to her mind. Presently she turns away, with dim eyes and a short, stifled sob in her throat—turns, and is face to face with the man of whom her heart is full. Poor little girl! her nerves are overstrung—it is so sudden; she is not mistress of herself. A short, sharp cry—a

movement towards him—and she would have fallen prone at his feet, but that Guy catches her in his arms. It is the work of an instant, this strange tableau. Fortunately it has but few spectators, and these few are only aware that a young girl has fainted, and is being supported by a man who looks quite equal to the task. They do not crowd round, but look askance with a certain interest.

“Oh! Guy, what is this? Is it some friend of yours?” asks a sympathetic woman’s voice; and Guy, having carried his burden to a seat, the owner of the voice proceeds to untie the bonnet-strings and loosen the fastenings round the child’s throat and waist.

“Yes,” responds Guy, very flushed and anxious, as strong men usually are at sight of a fainting woman.

And all this time Philip is standing speechless, whilst these strangers take his life, his darling, out of his hands—take

her from him for ever, he feels, with a desperate pain at his heart.

"Is she used to these attacks?"—the lady appeals to Philip.

"Yes—no—I think not," he answers, confusedly, gazing with terror at the white face, and yet conscious of a fierce wish that she might never wake again, if she is to be taken from him. He knows by instinct who this man is, and why the sight of him has overcome Dolores.

At this moment her eyes unclosed—vacant and dull at first; then a frightened look comes into them, and she puts out a hand to Guy.

"Oh! take care of me—do not leave me!" she whispers, imploringly.

What tortures some folk are made to suffer in this life! I wonder what Philip had done to deserve this?

Guy feels the awkwardness of the position. He does not know who Dolores' companion is, but feels, somehow, that he

is in love with her, and that he is suffering cruelly. Milly Charteris, who is Guy's companion, has, with her usual tact, guessed the position.

"No," she answers, soothingly, "we will not leave you. Come, you are much better already. We have a carriage here,"—turning to Philip. "Will it not be best for me to take her home? I think in these cases,"—and she smiles her own winning, gracious smile—"a woman's care is the thing. Shall I go with her, and stay until you come?"

"Thank you," answers Captain Etherege. "If you will be so good as to take Miss Power to the Hôtel —, her maid is there, and will take every care of her, until——" "Until I come," he was going to say, but he dreaded seeing Dolores by herself, and had half made up his mind to flee from Paris altogether.

"Lean on my arm," says Mrs. Charteris, kindly; and Dolores rises, faint

and trembling, and does as she is told.

"I think we must have you the other side," Milly remarks to Philip; and he mechanically draws the little hand (reluctant, he feels painfully) within his arm. Guy brings up the rear.

When they are in the carriage Dolores gives a little feeble smile to Philip, and says, "Thank you, I am better;" then a violent blush crimsones her white face as Guy shakes her by the hand, and she whispers, "You *will* come and see me?"

"Certainly I will;" and they drive off. The two men are left staring blankly at each other, feeling something must be said, not knowing what, or how to say it, and wishing themselves a thousand miles away. Guy is the first to break the silence.

"It is some time since I saw Miss Power. I—I am afraid by her dress, she has had some loss. I—I presume I have the pleasure of speaking to a relation, or——"

"No relation," Captain Etherege returns coldly, "I was——" with slight emphasis. For the life of him he cannot say, I am engaged to be married to Miss Power.

"Let me congratulate you," says Guy ignoring the *was*, and trying to put some heartiness into his voice. "Miss Power is so charming and amiable, and——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupts Philip, with cold politeness, "if I remind you I am quite ignorant to whom I have the honour of speaking."

"Oh! of course, to be sure, I ought to have remembered," and Guy dives into his breast pocket, and produces a card from his note-book.

As Philip reads, the pain at his heart grows sharper. So then this man has rank and wealth in addition to his handsome person. He knows the name well enough, and remembers shooting years ago at Wentworth when the Baronet was a schoolboy.

He has given up carrying cards, he sees no society—he hates even the sound of the name that has been so bitterly disgraced.

“I have no card with me,” he says; “my name is Etherege.”

“Oh, Etherege of the —th ?” asks Guy, who is ignorant of the painful story attached to it.”

“I was in the—th,” Philip replies, stiffly.

“I have two or three tremendous friends in it. Your name seems so familiar to me, I am sure I must have heard them speak of you.

“Possibly.”

Guy is rather at a loss what to say next. He stands for a moment tapping his boot with his stick, then blurts out,

“I suppose Mrs. Power’s death was rather sudden.”

“Quite sudden—heart disease. Did you know her well ?” eyeing him narrowly.

Guy reddens under his gaze, a guilty, confused feeling overtakes him.

"No, indeed—in fact I never saw her. My acquaintance with her daughter was—"  
Oh, hang it! he ejaculates mentally, how the deuce am I to explain to him?

Captain Etherege's lips are severely compressed, a feeling of hatred comes into his heart, and he says, with his brows bent deeply together:

"I take it you are the *gentleman* who painted Miss Power's portrait some twelve months ago?"

"Yes," replies the other, more uncomfortable than ever. "I don't know what you have heard about the matter, but of course, in your position, you have a perfect right to ask for an explanation, and I shall be very glad to give it you—only" (looking round) "this isn't quite a convenient spot for private talk."

"No," Captain Etherege assents. "But don't misunderstand me. I neither consider myself entitled to ask an explanation, nor do I ask one, but there are some



things I should be glad to say to you. Will it be convenient for me to call upon you, or——”

“By all means. What time will suit you best?”

“Five o'clock.”

Guy remembers that he has promised to take Milly to make a call at that hour. He would not break an engagement made with her for the most important business in the world.

“I'm afraid I shall be engaged all the afternoon,” he answers. “Will it be very inconvenient to you to say this evening?”

“I should prefer it.”

“Nine o'clock, then, if that suits you.”

“Nine be it.”

Their eyes meet for a moment, they raise their hats to each other with a distant ceremony such as Englishmen rarely use, then they part with a feeling of intense relief.

## CHAPTER VII.

## WHAT FATE DECREES.

PHILIP walks away fast, knows not, cares not, whither, except that he desires to get away from his kind. The bustle of the streets, the cheery looks of the light-hearted folk who walk briskly by him in quest of business or pleasure—nay, the bright sunshine itself—all are hateful to him ; he would fain get away from them all. If he could only get away from himself ! He turns his steps mechanically across the Place de la Concorde, up the Champs Elysées, bethinking him vaguely of some long, dim, desolate alleys that he has glanced down when driving in the Bois

with Dolores. He will not think yet; he must be alone first; and he hurries on, on, on, until he reaches his goal.

The perspiration is streaming from his face, and some French nurses, who are airing their little charges in the sun, laugh, and point at him for a crazy Englishman.

He has got away from everyone now, from the sunshine too; the jealous pines shut out Phœbus' warm, inquisitive glances, and he is as much alone as if he were a thousand miles from the habitations and haunts of men.

"Oh! fool, fool, fool!" he groans to himself in a rage of pain. "After all these years' experience of life, to dream there was anything in store for you but bitterness and disappointment! To think that you, old, worn as you are, were a fitting companion for that bright young life!"

He stands leaning against the stiff, straight stem of a pine-tree, devoured with

furious pain and self-contempt, trying to staunch his agony with bitter, angry taunts against his own folly. It would be a relief, he thinks, in his dumb suffering, to fling himself on the earth, to tear his flesh with his nails, to drag his hair out by the roots,—to indulge himself in an ecstasy of bodily abandonment and anguish, after old Eastern fashion, if it were not for that proud instinct that makes the cultured European and the wild savage alike indomitable in their courage of silent suffering.

The blow he had deprecated has fallen, and he knows that no whit has he underestimated its effect. Until he loved this child he had lived fearless of what the morrow might bring forth, since he had no joys of which Fate might rob him. From the day when he had known she might be his, he had felt as though he stood between Heaven and Hell, impotent to raise himself to the one or save himself from the other.

He knows the worst now, and the fact that he has all along feared and dreaded it, makes the blow no lighter. Better, after all, a fool's paradise than to have enjoyed neither anticipation nor fruition.

He would like to leave Paris at once, never to see Dolores any more ; but that is impossible, until he is assured that her other friends will take her under their care. A new thought strikes him. This man, who won and flung her love aside with equal indifference—what reason was there to suppose he would occupy himself with her future now any more than he had done before ? It was a chance meeting—his manner had been only just so kind as the occasion demanded—he had promised at her request to go and see her—that was all.

That was all ; yes, all ! as though that all did not contain the severance of Philip from his one ewe lamb, his all of hope and promise in the future. His thoughts will wander off—he cannot, cannot bring them

to the point of what work lies for him in the next few hours. He will see the child—he will not see her—he will arrange all with Marcelline and go off—whither? leaving a message—a simple adieu, or a few written words for her indifferent eyes.

Presently he leaves the sunless alley of pines—comes out into the broad sunshine, careless alike of both, and wends his slow, homeward way—thinking, thinking all the while, and yet unable to decide on anything. Suddenly he remembers his appointment with Sir Guy, and his bronzed face deepens with a hot flush. Why should he see this man, this *débonnaire*, selfish worldling, whose pastime is breaking men's and women's hearts. So we judge each other. Whose pain is like our pain?—which of us reads in a smiling face the heartache lurking behind.

“Yes,” Philip mutters fiercely, “for her sake I must see him—I must learn how he feels to her,”

Returning to the hotel, he finds the sitting-room untenanted. He rings the bell and asks for Marcelline. In quick answer to his summons she appears, but without her habitual cheery expression, looking pale, constrained, and anxious. At this moment both feel acutely the inconvenience of not having a common tongue wherein to express themselves. Philip is more conversant with French than Marcelline with English, but the latter has by far the less *mauvaise honte*. There are some things that must be said. So Philip conquers his hesitation, and blunders on regardless of mood, tense, grammar, articles; but he reaches his end—he makes Marcelline understand him.

“It is all over between us; it was my fault—I am too old. She could not love me. She saw the man she really did love—it is much better now than later. You will find out what she wishes to do; to remain, or go back to Rouen—you will let

me know to-morrow. I will arrange everything. I do not wish to see her. Tell her I shall never trouble her any more."

Marcelline's glib tongue is dumb; she is smitten with remorse, as though she, too, had stabbed this noble heart; her thoughts go back to the day when she let the handsome stranger in at the garden gate—when she took the money to let him paint the child, though every sou of it had gone in wax-candles for the Virgin, according to her vow, and she feels miserable and guilty.

"It was the shock of a moment," she says, trying to re-assure herself and him at the same time; "it will pass off. Mademoiselle is quite sensible that the milord does not think of her; she is already angry with herself for her foolishness."

One faint dim shadow of a hope flits before Philip's mind, but lasts no longer than it took time to shape.

"Did she not say to you that she could



never marry me now?" he asks, looking keenly at her.

The shrewd French face puckers uneasily.

"One must not always listen to children; they do not know what is good for them."

At this moment a small white face and trembling figure appears at the door, hesitates a moment, and then comes forward into the room. Philip stands immovable in his place, but Marcelline goes quickly out, shutting the door softly behind her.

"*Voyons !*" she mutters, with a more cheery air, "perhaps affairs may still mend themselves. Poor gentleman, poor gentleman ! Holy Virgin take pity upon him !"

Dolores comes up to Philip, stands silently before him, with drooped lids and white, waxen face, stained, he sees, with tears; then, with a sudden impulse, she throws herself, with a storm of sobs, at his feet.

For a moment he stands motionless, staring

with dull eyes at the sweet mass of quivering womanhood at his feet, scarcely taking in the sense of the scene ; then he groans to himself, in horrible pain, " O God ! to think this child should have to suffer !" and, smitten with infinite compassion, he takes her reluctant form in his strong arms, and places her beside him on the sofa.

She hides her face in the cushions, and cries more bitterly still. The sound of it lacerates his over-strung nerves.

" For pity's sake, leave off crying, child !" he says, almost harshly in his pain—" why should *you* cry ?"


His tone, so different from what she has ever heard it, startles her, but it has the happy effect of stopping her sobs.

" I cry," she answers, trembling, her face hidden in her hands, " because I am so miserable—so wicked and ungrateful. Oh, Philip, you have been so good to me, and I—I——"

" Little one," he answers, his voice

quite calm now, "do not say one word against yourself; you are not to blame. How could you know? But I—I ought to have known—I did know, only I shut my eyes and ears. You see, child,"—taking her hand tenderly—"even when one is old and wise in the world's knowledge, one makes great mistakes, and then one has to suffer for them. But the innocent must not suffer with the guilty. Little one,"—earnestly—"you must not be unhappy; you have all your life before you. I did not see it in the same light before,"—with a strong effort and a choked voice—"but it would have been a crime in me to tie your bright young life to mine, worn and wasted as it is. And I can bear it better now, you know,"—smiling feebly—"than later, when you would have been the life of my life."

The deep flush in his face, the strong beating of his heart, belie his words. But she is not thinking much of him—hardly



hears what he is saying. She is wondering if Guy will really come to see her. Oh, unfair, inconstant woman mind! He feels it, knows it intuitively, and he would not be a man did not a pang of jealousy spring up in bitter conflict with his self-abnegation.

"When I am gone you will see him," he says, bitterly.

Dolores starts, and a crimson flush overspreads her pale cheeks.

"Monsieur!" she begins, haughtily; but her pride dies away in a moment, and she returns to her piteous sobbing.

As Philip looks at her his heart is torn in twain. For sheer pity's sake, if he did not love her madly as he does, he would fain take this little tender girl in his arms and soothe her; but he dares not. What! to feel her shrink from him!—to know his caresses were repulsive to her! So he goes away to the window, and stares listlessly out, with his hands pressed against

his head, that he may not hear the maddening sound of her sobs. But he hears them all the same.

Presently the sound ceases, or, rather, becomes intermittent, and he returns to the sofa, where she lies with her face buried in the cushions. For a moment he stands looking down at her—at the small, lithe figure that still heaves, the round white throat, the bronze hair, and tiny shell-pink ear; the delicate hand clenched against her black dress, with the diamonds (his gift) shining on it; and the little foot, twisting and writhing in its fairy-small slipper. He looks as a painter might look upon the fairest thing his genius ever created, knowing he should never look upon it again—that it should never bear his name; and his teeth clench involuntarily, and his breath comes hard. For a moment he gives way; it is only for a moment. As he sits down beside her, and takes her hand, he is strong again.

"Dolores," he whispers, tenderly but gravely, not the least like a lover, "I want you to listen to me for a little. Put entirely out of your mind, as I have done" (poor Philip!), "that you and I were ever anything to each other more than dear friends, and hear what I have to say."

She raises her head, and looks at him with blue, wet, mournful eyes, feeling thoroughly guilty and miserable.

"Yes," she says, humbly, "I am listening."

Philip hesitates; he does not in the least know how to express what he wants to say. She is looking at him. This time it is she who is calm, he nervous and excited. He speaks fast, to conceal his agitation.

"I am going away to-night; I shall not trouble you any more. I shall arrange with Marcelline for you to stay here, or return to Rouen,—which you please. But—oh! child, I must warn you," he says, sud-

denly and passionately, "beware how you give way to loving this man, until you know whether he has anything to give you in return. You do not know the horrible pain of loving when you are not loved."

"Do I not?" she says simply, looking fixedly at him; and, with a sudden rush of memory, comes upon him that day when he first saw her little form quivering with sobs in the church of St. Ouen—the night when he found her bending, with outstretched arms, over the dull, black waters of the Seine.

"Philip," she continues, with something of dignity, childish as she is, "I beg you do not think so meanly of me as to believe I would suffer myself to go on breaking my heart about some one who has no thought for me. I do not deceive myself. Sir Guy"—she pronounces the name without faltering—"only liked me as a little girl, who made a few hours pass for him. He never loved me the least; he never

will—oh! I feel he never will!” with tremulous emphasis. “It is not that I care for him—oh! Philip, believe me”—and she speaks earnestly, as if she not only wishes to convince him, but herself, of the truth of what she is saying,—“only—only—I feel I never, *never* could *marry* anyone. If,” she goes on, imploringly,—“if you would only still be my friend, and love me like a little sister, and let me live with you and Mary——”

“Impossible!” he utters, almost harshly. “No, child; I leave you to-night, and I hope never to see you any more.”

She shrinks away from him, frightened at the tone of his voice.

“Forgive me, dear,” he says penitently, recovering himself. “Of course I will always be your friend—always do everything in my power to further your happiness. Whenever you have need of me you will only have to write to me, and I will be to you in place of a brother—or a father,” he



adds, with some bitterness. "You know, child, it is not possible to live in sight of what one most desires and covets, when one knows one can never reach out one's hand to grasp it."

"I don't know," says the girl, dreamily. "I used to think, if I could only be always with him——"

Then she stops, her face suffused with blushes, remembering to whom she is making this confidence; but he answers quietly:

"You are an innocent little child; you do not even comprehend in the very least what a man feels."

"Does he feel that to be away from what he loves is utter misery?" she asks, with kindling eyes. "Does he feel that everything pleasant is gone out of life? Does he feel that he would like to be dead, only that he might forget?"

"Ay, child," he groans in answer, "and more than that—much more."

"There is nothing more," she says, shaking her head.

The sitting-room door is thrown wide open by a waiter, and Sir Guy Wentworth's tall figure is visible in the doorway. Dolores is seized with sudden confusion. She remembers her tear-stained face, her disordered hair and neglected toilette, and, starting up, she rushes across the room, and makes her escape through another door. Philip rises stiffly. Guy looks very much embarrassed, but says, trying to speak naturally,

"I am very glad to see that Miss Power has recovered from her—her indisposition this morning. I came to inquire after her, but perhaps she does not feel equal or inclined to see visitors. I believe" (very courteously) "I am to have the pleasure of meeting you to-night. I think I will withdraw now." And he turns to leave the room.

Philip's heart beats very fast, but his mind is made up.

"If your time is at your disposal," he says, with cold politeness, "I shall be glad to have a few moments' conversation now. I am anxious, if possible, to leave Paris to-night."

"By all means," answers Guy, putting down his hat, and endeavouring to speak unconcernedly, although he feels the interview is not going to be a very agreeable one. "I was to have taken my sister-in-law out, but she has a headache. Very trying weather!"

"I beg your pardon," says Philip, writing something on a piece of paper. He rings the bell, and gives it to the waiter. It is a line to Dolores, asking her not to return to the room until he sends for her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## LOVERS AND LOVERS.

THE two men are alone together, yet for a few moments neither speaks—Guy, because he is utterly at a loss what to say next; Philip, because a horribly difficult task lies before him. How can he make his darling small in this man's eyes by betraying her love of him; and yet for what other purpose has this miserable, hateful meeting been convened than to talk of her and of her future? He begins his bitter task at last, speaking unconsciously in a hard, cold, constrained voice.

"I should wish to explain to you the seemingly equivocal position in which you

find Miss Power and myself. My sister, with whom she has principally stayed since her mother's death, was suddenly called to England by illness ; it had been arranged that we were all to spend a week together in Paris, and not liking to disappoint Miss Power, I brought her here with Marcelline. We *were* to have been married shortly."

His voice has grown harsher, until it is painfully abrupt.

Guy's strong brown fingers clench themselves uneasily round his stick ; there is an uncomfortable sensation in his throat as he says interrogatively, "*Were* to have been ? I hope——" he stammers, and his voice fails him.

"It was hardly a very suitable marriage," Philip continues, speaking like some unsympathetic, dispassionate third person. "She was so many years younger than I, and I had so little to offer her, still——"

"Pardon me !" says Guy, breaking in, "if you are under the impressiou that I

have the desire or right to know any matters connected with Miss Power, I should wish to explain to you at once that though I feel the greatest friendship and interest in her, I——”

“I know exactly the relations between you and Miss Power,” utters Captain Etherege, in a freezing tone; “and although” (proudly) “explanations from me to you are unnecessary, there are reasons which make me desire to enter upon them.”

Sir Guy merely inclines his head, and relapses into silence.

“I saw her for the first time, a few months ago, in Rouen,” Philip proceeds; “she was sitting behind a pillar in St. Ouen, crying so bitterly that it made me wretched to see her; a few nights after, I followed her as she was hurrying down to the river. I stopped her from drowning herself.”

For the first time Philip looks at his auditor, whose face is colourless to the lips.

"From that time we saw a great deal of her, my sister and I. Her mother died. I, loving her, and seeing that she had no friends or relations, asked her to marry me. Then she told me—about you."

Guy starts up, the crimson flushing through his bronzed face; takes two or three sharp turns; then, pulling himself up abruptly in front of Philip, and looking him straight in the face, says,

"You must think me an awful black-guard."

Philip returns the look, but is silent. In his heart he does not condemn the man before him, fain though he would. Something frank and true speaks from the heart through the eyes and says, This is a man of honour!

"Before God," Guy says with passionate earnestness, "I had no idea that the poor little thing" (Philip winces) "cared for me so much. I may have, nay I *must* have been to blame; but when I saw her pretty face

and wanted to sketch it, when I talked to her up in the little garden at Rouen, I had no thought of any danger to her. You know," adds the young man apologetically, "one can't be such a conceited ass as to go about afraid to speak to a pretty girl, for fear she should fall in love with one. When she came to me in Paris I was awfully cut up."

The blood rushes tingling into Philip's white face. Guy, seeing it, pauses awkwardly, then resumes more earnestly—

"I need not tell you that if she had been my sister——"

"To doubt you would be to doubt her!" rejoins Captain Etherege icily.

"If it had got wind in the place—if any trouble had come to her through it, I would have married her. I should have done so as it was, only——" It is Guy's turn to wince and grow red now.

"You cared for some one else?"

"I did."



“And you still——”

“I cannot marry the woman I love. I shall never love any other,” Guy answers a little stiffly.

Philip could almost laugh to himself—laugh, not for mirth, but to think of the bitter cross-purposes of Fate—of himself who loves the child so tenderly, of her who loves this man, of him who loves another woman, and all equally in vain. To think of anything so tender, so sweet, so exquisite as Dolores loving in vain !

“But surely,” Guy resumes, “since all this is past, why should we rake it up again. I am but too willing to answer any question you choose to put to me, but if you love Dolores, and she has consented to be your wife, surely——”

Captain Etherege rises and walks to the window ; the words he has to say are bitter to him.

“When I left this house with her this morning, it was in the firm belief that she

was willing to be my wife. You observed the effect the sight of you produced upon her ; since then she has told me she cannot marry me."

"A child's fancy," mutters Guy. "In a little time——"

"In a little time!" retorts Philip, turning upon him, "how long is it since she came to you here in Paris?"

"But what can I do?" returns the young man with some *hauteur*. "It is most unfortunate, but I hardly see——"

"I was too hasty," says Philip, collecting himself. He remembers that on his discretion, on his forgetfulness of himself at this moment, hangs, perhaps, the future of the girl whom he loves so dearly.

"You must see," he says, speaking more coldly the more acutely he feels, "that my position is rather a painful one. It is not in my power to make or mar her life now ; but you——"

"I!" says Guy, hesitating.

"Do not think for one instant," pursues Philip warmly, "that I am interceding with you in Miss Power's behalf; if you do not care for her, it would be better a thousand times she never saw you again. I am only thinking you may have friends who, for your sake, would be kind to her—who would introduce her into some society; for at this moment she is without friends, position, without anyone in the world except her faithful old nurse."

"Has she no relations?" Guy asks.

"Her mother died leaving no clue whatever to the past, and the lawyers who managed her affairs could tell us nothing."

A sudden thought flashes across Guy—under the influence of it his breath comes quickly, the red colour deepens in his face. What has he to look forward to in life? He loves one woman as in the depths of his heart he *knows* he can never love any other! This poor innocent little girl loves him; after all, it is sweet to be loved, even

when one has no love to give in exchange—sweetest of all, perhaps, to feel one can inspire it when one's heart aches for the love one cannot have. He, so unhappy in his passion, can bestow great happiness on this little suffering child. She is pure, and how faithful she has been to him all these many months, whilst he selfishly had forgotten her. But he cannot suddenly make this plunge—he must have time given him to think. So he rises somewhat abruptly, saying,

“I would do anything in the world for Miss Power. If you will allow me I will think it over, and see you again this evening.”

The two men bow coldly to each other, and Guy, taking his hat, goes out. Goes out half giddy, confused; the strange new thought surging in his brain, and walks on towards his hotel, passing the same shops, the same streets, which he had passed that night she came to him in Paris,

and he had paced up and down racking his brain to know what to do with her. Well, he knows now—what should he do but marry her? She is very young, very fair, and she loves him, ay! no doubt of that need perplex his thoughts. He goes straight to his room, gives strict orders to his servant that he shall not be disturbed, and locks himself in.

“Stay!” he cries, unbolting the door and calling back his man, “if Mrs. Characteris wants me, let me know.”

For nothing can make him forget her. Alone, he throws himself into a chair and thinks. It is not unpleasant to him, this new thought of a young, beautiful, loving wife. He has not much joy of his life now—it was pleasant enough before Fate made him love so madly and miserably this woman who never can be his, but now what has he to look forward to? He cannot be much longer in Milly’s society—the pain is too great, and besides, he is nothing to her,

only her husband's brother. As he drifts into the memory of her, he rouses himself with an impatient gesture, and goes back to his thoughts of Dolores. Yes! he will make a pet, a toy, a plaything of her. She is beautiful; well, he will make her more beautiful, with every adornment that wealth can buy. She loves him dearly; he will be so good to her, she shall love him tenfold more—in time he will grow to love her as much, and she will make him forget that he ever loved unhappily.

So men argue and resolve.

He thinks over what Philip has told him of his first meeting with the little thing drowned in tears, then of her attempt to throw herself into the Seine. A thrill runs through his veins, half of horror, half of joy, to know that he is so passionately loved; and then for the first time he thinks of Philip. He has only seen the cold exterior of a man of middle age, whose feelings are too well under command

for any outward observer to guess the bitter pain of his heart; and so he thinks little of his sacrifice. Going to marry her out of kindness—does not seem very sorry to be out of it—doesn't think, from his look, she would have had much of a time of it—that is Guy's mental verdict. That is the way in which we pronounce upon each other.

He sits thinking and thinking, until he has argued himself into the conviction that he is bound by every feeling of honour to marry Dolores. He would like to know something more of her antecedents; but she is a perfect little lady, and has he not position enough for them both? Yes, it is all settled; he will marry her at once, as soon as everything can be arranged, at the Chapel of the Embassy; and Milly will take care of her till then. He has half a mind to send and beg an interview with his sister-in-law. But no, she is not well, and he would not disturb her; and then,

perhaps the sight of her, the sound of her voice, might make him feel differently—might make him swerve from his hour-old resolution.

He unbolts his door, and Stevens appears.

“The Captain’s been here for you, Sir Guy, and wanted very much to see you; but I told him your orders. He wanted to know where you were going to dine, Sir Guy.”

Guy had actually forgotten about dinner. After a moment’s pause he says,

“I have an engagement. Go and tell Captain Charteris I shall not be able to dine with him to-night. Stay, give me my coat, and wait until I have gone.”

Stevens is a very shrewd person. Knowing most of his master’s business, and a good deal more, he has the well-bred stolidity that distinguishes a servant who knows his duty. He is attached to his master; but over and beyond that he has a professional interest in finding out any-



thing that relates to his master's affairs.

"Rattling good servant!" Guy once described him—"never forgets anything—no curiosity—never bothers his head about things that don't concern him."

Yet Stevens was the only person who knew that Guy was in love with his sister-in-law.

Sir Guy goes out, and betakes himself to a small café in a side-street, where he feels quite sure of not meeting any acquaintance. He is pre-occupied, but that does not prevent his selecting various dishes from the *carte*, and partaking of them with a certain amount of relish, since they happen to be remarkably well cooked and served. An hour later he is again in the hotel where Dolores is staying, asking for Captain Etherege. He is ushered upstairs, and finds Dolores sitting alone. She starts up on his entrance, colouring deeply, and rising, stammers,

"I did not expect you."

"Did you not?" he says, coming forward with a smile and outstretched hand. "At all events, I hope the surprise is not an unpleasant one."

He is not constrained or embarrassed; why should he be? He is no doubting lover hanging for his fate upon his mistress's word. He is here to ask a very pretty girl, who, he knows without a doubt, adores him, to be his wife. The task is not wholly an unpleasant one, for she is passing fair this child who stands downcast and trembling before him.

"I came to see Captain Etherege," proceeds Guy; "but since he is not here——"

"He will be back at nine—he sent me word so by Marcelline. It is barely eight yet," glancing at the gilt timepiece.

"So much the better," replies Guy, quite unembarrassed, laying down his hat. "May I take off my coat?" divesting himself of it before she has time to reply.

Dolores has not resumed her seat, but is

standing by the fireplace, trying hard to compose herself—to still the tremulousness that shakes all her delicate frame. Guy comes towards her, the smile deepening on his handsome face, a pleasant sense of possession stealing over him at her mere physical loveliness, and in a moment naturally, without hesitation, stretches out his arm to draw her towards him.

“Don’t!” she cries, violently, starting back, a nameless sick terror taking possession of her.

“Dolores,” he utters, half reproachfully, “I have come to ask you to be my wife.”

The colour glows fiercely again in the cheeks that had grown pale. She looks at him fixedly for a moment, then, drawing still further from him, answers, in a firm voice,

“Never!”

Guy is taken a little by surprise. He is certainly not a vain man, but under the circumstances, the sacrifice being on his

side, he had expected her to fall at once, happily, if not gratefully, into his arms; instead of which she stands glaring at him like a young pythoness, and reiterating "Never!"

The assumption of this position in the girl supposed to be breaking her heart for love of him somewhat alters the aspect of affairs. Guy naturally grows warmer in the face of opposition.

"My dear child," he says, not attempting to touch her now, "pray forgive me. I was too abrupt. I fancied that you liked me a little, and——"

"And you came to ask me just out of pity!" cries the girl, excitedly.

"Indeed no," he answers, a little shocked at this coarse way of putting it.

"Indeed yes!" she retorts, passionately. "He has told you, I know, and it was mean and cruel of him."

Guy, being about as clever at subterfuge as most straightforward Englishmen,

is rather at a disadvantage. A lie sticks in his throat, and nothing short of it is required to calm the girl's excitement.

"My dear child—" he protests ; but she interrupts him.

"Do you think I do not know? Cannot I read it in your face? If he had not told you, would you have come into the room smiling and looking quite sure of what I should answer when you did me the honour to ask me?"

Never before has Dolores been so passionately excited. She feels degraded in her own eyes, and it makes her bitter against the man who she feels has degraded her, dearly though she loves him.

"What a clumsy brute I am!" Guy thinks to himself. "Of course I ought not to have blundered at it in that way—no wonder she resents it, poor little thing;" but her behaviour was the effect of making him more solicitous about the prize he had besought in so cavalier a fashion.

"Have I offended you?" he asks rather humbly, not being skilled in the treatment of wayward young women.

"Offended me!" with a touch of scorn. "Oh! Sir Guy, you do me too much honour, only" (her voice breaking suddenly)—"only, unfortunately, I know that you had an interview with Captain Etherege to-day, when he told you that—that I loved you" (her face dyed with hot shame), "and so out of pity—*out of pity*, you ask me to be your wife."

"But I assure you," pleads Guy.

"Else" (interrupting him passionately)—"else why have you been all these months without coming to see if I was alive or dead, without writing me one line, without thinking of me once; and now to-day, to-day you come suddenly with a face that says, 'I have but to hold out my arms, and she will rush into them.'"

She stands before him with her lovely eyes dilated, her mouth quivering, every

line and curve of her delicate figure shaking with intense emotion; her utterance is rapid, and tinged by the faintest foreign accent.

Guy had come coolly to the wooing, in a composed after-dinner frame of mind—he was utterly unprepared for any scene of this kind—he had come with the intention of saying in so many words,

“My dear child, I am a disappointed man, tired of the world, tired of myself, tired of everything. I have no romantic love to give you; no doubt in time I shall be very fond of you; you are a very dear little thing, and I hope you will be content to take me as I am.”

His ideas on this subject undergo some modification. Such a style of wooing hardly seems suited to the present emergency, and, manlike, or perhaps rather human-like, he begins to set a little more store by the thing that is not so easy to win as he imagined.

## CHAPTER IX.

GOOD-BYE!

“**I**NDEED I do love you, Dolores, awfully!” says the young man, making emphatic use of the word to which the present generation have by common consent given a new and utterly inappropriate signification.

As he speaks, he feels quite certain that what he says is true. She, standing before him there, looks so sweet and fair, so altogether desirable, it is no longer a hard task to frame words loving enough to woo her.

She is not shrewd, nor clever, nor penetrating, but she can hear the altered ring



of the voice, and so hearing, looks up.

“Not *awfully!*” she says with pretty emphasis—“a very little perhaps.”

“Let me talk to you, darling,” he whispers, drawing her gently to his side on the sofa—very gently, that she may not recoil from him again. “Why won’t you believe me when I say I love you?”

“Because,” she answers simply, “you were with me much in the last Spring. You could not love me then; if you had cared even a very little for me, you would have come just once to see me—*ah, mon Dieu!* just once in all those months that I sat praying for you under the old apple-trees. Or, if that were too much to ask, you might have sent me a few lines to say you had not forgotten me altogether. Every day I stood at the gate, and how my heart beat as I watched the postman come up the hill, till when he came to the gate I turned sick with hope and fear; but he always passed” (sighing). “At least

you might have replied to the letter I wrote to you."

"Letter, my dear child!" cries Guy, remorseful at hearing how she has suffered for his sake, "I never received one. But that is easily accounted for. I told them at home not to forward my letters, little dreaming there was one I should have been so glad to get."

"Well!" pursues Dolores, following her own thoughts, and not his words, "and all this time you never cared or wished to see or know of me, and yet now to-day you would persuade me that you have all at once come to love me! How can I believe you? It is out of the goodness of your heart—indeed, I thank you, but pitiful as I must seem in your eyes, I could not accept such a sacrifice."

"But suppose," says Guy, his colour deepening a little as his conscience accuses him of perverting the truth, "suppose that last year there was an obstacle to my ask-

ing you to be my wife—an obstacle that is removed now ?”

She looks keenly in his face.

“ Oh, if I could only believe,” she cries, half joyful, half doubting, “ that you had loved me a little then !”

“ If it had not been for the obstacle I speak of, I should have asked you then to marry me.”

“ Really and in truth ?” she asks wistfully.

“ Really and in truth,” he affirms. •

“ But what was the obstacle ?” she asks, woman-like.

The truth rises to his lips. “ I loved another woman,” but he represses it. Why give her needless pain ; and besides, that question answered, a dozen others would follow, and he never means her to know who has been her rival, so he only strokes her hair and answers,

“ Little curiosity ! what does it matter since the obstacle is removed ?”

"Are you sure it is quite removed?" she goes on persistently.

He pauses a moment, and then says,  
"Quite sure."

But a sigh escapes him, and she takes note of it.

"I know," she says, reddening, and with a sigh too. "You loved some one else."

"I am not going to be cross-questioned," he answers, trying to speak lightly.

"And perhaps," continues Dolores, with eyes intent upon his face,— "perhaps you love her still?"

"Hush!" he says, putting his hand to her lips. "Do I not love you?—and how can I love two people at the same time? Come, darling, tell me that you will be my own beautiful little wife, and I swear to you you shall never have cause to think I love anyone better than you."

"Swear to me first," she says, solemnly, "that you love me better than anyone else in the world."

For a moment he hesitates, and then asks evasively,

"What makes you so suspicious? How can I prove to you that I love you dearly?"

"By swearing what I ask—if you can," she returns, sadly.

"But I have a mother," he says, trying to turn it off laughingly; "I love her very much."

"Ah! that is quite different. You know one could never be jealous of a man's love for his mother."

"Are you jealous, Dolores?" he asks her.

"I do not know," she replies, reflectively. "I think I should be—oh yes," she adds, warmly, "I am quite sure I should be."

"Well, you shall not be put to the test. I will never look at another woman," he says, laughing, "if you forbid it, except those of my own family."

"Was that lady you were with to-day

one of your own family?" Dolores asks, after a slight pause.

"Yes—my brother's wife," trying to speak unconcernedly.

"Do you like her?"

"Yes."

"Did you know her before she married him?"

Guy takes both her hands in his.

"I shall not answer you any more questions until you have answered mine. Will you marry me, Dolores?"

She twists herself free from him, goes to the window, looks out, and then comes back.

"Oh! if I could only be quite, quite sure that you really love me!" she utters, wistfully.

"Be quite sure, then, darling." And the young man puts his arm round her and draws her head upon his shoulder.

She leaves it there this time, but he feels her whole frame quivering with sobs. Her

heart is bitter within her. Although her hopes have come to fruition, the taste of them is not such as she had fancied. In the days gone by, when she had sat under the apple-trees, weaving memory and imagination into fair pictures, she had thought of some such scene as this, where he would say "I love you, Dolores;" and it had seemed to her as though the happiness would be so supreme, so ecstatic, she could ask no more of life afterwards. But now that her head lay on his breast, that he whispered a thousand endearing words in her ear, it was all blank disappointment; for she knew, in her inmost heart, that he did not love as she loved him—as Philip loved her. Poor Philip! she could feel for him now.

Sir Guy was sorely troubled what to do with her. He was so grieved at her distress, it inspired him with so much pity, that she grew every moment dearer to him. And there was no insincerity in his words

as he essayed to soothe and bring her to a happier frame of mind. He sat beside her, holding her hands in his kind, strong clasp, talking to her about the future—about his home, and all the bright things of the new life that should open for her; and, as he grew warm in his pleading, the picture seemed fair enough to him too.

The child's tears ceased to flow; her eyes grew brighter, a smile parted her lips, the bitterness began to die away, and happy thoughts to come in the place of sorrowful ones. He must love her, or he could not talk so gladly, so eagerly, of a future to be spent with her.

There comes a sudden knock at the door, and they start away from each other with a sort of guilty instinct; both expect to see Captain Etherege in the doorway. But it is only a waiter, who, after a discreet pause, and another knock, that elicits a spontaneous "*Entrez*" and "Come in," brings in a note, which he hands to



Sir Guy, and retires. It is from Philip.

“I daresay you will agree with me that there can be no advantage in our meeting again, as was arranged. All there is to say can be more easily written. If you cannot conveniently let me know now what you suggest for Miss Power’s future, a note will find me here up to ten o’clock to-morrow morning.”

Guy may be pardoned for misjudging the writer ; small wonder if he thinks the man whose short, harsh note he has just read must be harsh and cold too. Hastily he rings for paper and ink.

“Is it from Philip ?” asks Dolores timidly. “May I not see it ?”

For answer he puts it away in his breast-pocket, and kisses the outstretched hand.

“What an inquisitive little woman it is !” he laughs, as he betakes himself to answer it.

"DEAR SIR,

"Miss Power has consented to become my wife. From to-morrow my sister-in-law will, I know, be delighted to undertake the care of her until——" but he draws his pen through the last word, suppressing the sentence he had intended, as somewhat lacking in delicacy to Captain Etherege.

"Poor Philip!" sighs Dolores.

Guy looks up, smiling, and not one whit jealous.

"I suppose," he says, a sudden thought striking him, "that Captain Etherege and his sister were very kind to you, darling?"

"Oh, so very, *very* kind!" she responds, emphatically.

Thereupon he makes the following addendum to his note:

"I am aware how very kind you and Miss Etherege have been to Dolores, and trust you will not think it impertinent or

uncalled-for on my part if I thank you very earnestly and sincerely for your goodness to her. I trust—we both trust—that you will continue your friendship to her. I need not say you will always be welcome and honoured guests at Wentworth.”

In after-days Guy came to regard this production as a coarse, clumsy, almost brutal affair, but at the present moment he was satisfied with it, and lost no time in despatching it. Then he bade farewell to Dolores, promising to come early on the morrow, and to bring with him Mrs. Charteris, who would take her back to their hotel.

Philip, sitting in a room hard by, hears the firm step pass his door, and crushes in his hand the letter he holds. He could almost laugh—from no mirth, God wot!—to think of the position they stand in to each other. The man from love of whom he had rescued Dolores was rescuing her

from him now. Only twelve hours since, and she was to have been the wife of the one, and now the other is bidding him welcome to his and her joint friendship and hospitality in the future. There is but one thing for it—to get away as soon as possible. He will bid Dolores a kind, calm farewell—he has just nerve enough for that—and then away somewhere, no matter where, out of sight, out of mind of it all.

Thus resolved, he enters the room where Dolores sits buried in a reverie, half happy, half mournful. A crimson blush covers her face. She rises and makes a step towards him.

“I have come to say good-bye, Dolores,” he says, quietly.

His manner is so calm and cold that she thinks to herself, “After all, he did not care for me as I thought. Perhaps he, too, only felt pity for me.”

So she replies, somewhat bitterly,

"You do not seem very sorry to say it."

He checks the hasty answer that rises to his lips, and only says,

"I hope you will be very happy."

"Why should you go away and leave me just now?" she asks with a burst of selfish petulance.

"It is better so, child," he says, quietly.

"You will have plenty of friends now. I could do nothing for you if I stayed."

"You are unkind!" she retorts with rising tears; really because she knows not what to say, and feels a vague, irritable consciousness of wrong on her own side.

"Am I?" he answers, very patiently; "then forgive me, and wish me good-bye."

Angry with herself, she takes refuge in being irritable with him.

"Good-bye, then, if you wish it;" and she tears the diamond ring from her finger, and the locket from her neck, and thrusts

them towards him. A look of pain comes into his face.

"Don't do that, child," he says; "if you will no longer wear them, at least keep them, to remember that you were once loved very dearly. I don't suppose you will ever want a friend now, but if a time should come when I can be of the very least service to you, I think you know that you may rely on me. Write to my club in London—the letter will be sure to find me."

"And Mary!—what will Mary say?" asks the girl, uneasily.

"She will know that I was not well suited to you," he answers.

"And you think so too!" she says, pouting; "you are not so very sorry to be rid of me!"

"I think so too," he replies, only caring to answer the first part of her sentence. "Once more good-bye, child, and God bless you!"

So saying, he draws her towards him, kisses her white brow, and turning, leaves her. Returned to his room, Captain Etherege again sends for Marcelline, gives her certain instructions with money, and an address where he may be found ; packs his portmanteau, and within two hours had left Paris.

“Ce pauvre M. Philippe !” Marcelline says, plaintively, as she brushes out the child’s long hair at bed-time.

“I do not think you need pity him !” is the pettish retort ; “he does not seem to mind so very much.”

“*Va !*” replies Marcelline, sharply, “you are a little ungrateful one. Not mind ! when I read that in his eyes which only to look at brought the tears to my own. The good God grant, Mademoiselle, that you may never be sorry for this day’s work !”

“Why should I ?” she asks, impatiently ; “is not Sir Guy handsome, and good, and rich, and noble, and does he not love me ?”

"I hope so," Marcelline answers, drily, pursing up her lips.

"What do you mean!" cries Dolores, turning upon her passionately, the more so because her own heart misgives her; "do you dare to say Sir Guy does not love me?"

"No, no, no," replies her nurse, soothingly.

"You *did* mean that!" cries Dolores, excitedly, "and you are not my friend. Go away from me! do not touch me!" and she tears her hair from Marcelline's astonished grasp, who has never seen her child like this before.

"*Tiens, tiens!*" she says, cajolingly, "what has thy Marcelline said? Of course Sir Ghi loves thee, or why should he want to marry thee? I only meant that poor M. le Capitaine loved thee better than ever anyone else will, if thou livst to be a hundred. Thou canst not read the signs, but



I have not lived in the world all these years for nothing." And Marcelline nods her head sagaciously.

## CHAPTER X.

## GUY TELLS HIS STORY.

SIR GUY lighted his cigar at the door of the hotel, and proceeded to walk leisurely homewards, thinking as he went. The first thing to be done was to tell Milly, and to ask her opinion and advice. Not as to his marrying Dolores—that was already irrevocably decided,—but as to various preliminaries and arrangements. Should he tell her everything? He remembered that, on the night when Dolores came to him in Paris, Milly had caught a glimpse of her; not sufficient, perhaps, to enable her to recognise the child again, but Adrian had been in the room with her,

had spoken to her; there would be no possibility of deceiving him as to her identity. Another thought vexed him. Stevens was acquainted with the whole affair; and, although he had great confidence in him, he knows the best servants are given to gossip. All things considered, he resolves to confide completely in Mrs. Charteris, in whose judgment he has profound confidence.

He finds Milly looking very elegant, and beautifully dressed as usual, buried in a *dormeuse*, reading a French novel. She throws it away as he enters.

"Oh! I am so glad you have come back!—I am bored to death. Where is Adrian?"

"I don't know; I have not seen him since lunch."

"What! did he not dine with you?" asks Milly, reddening with something that is not pleasure.

"No; I dined alone."

"You might have given me the pleasure of your company, I think," she remarks, with some petulance.

"I should have been only too glad. The last I heard of you was that you had a headache, and were not to be disturbed—how is it now?"

"Oh, I slept it off; and when I came down there was no dinner ordered, and no one to dine with—and I hate dining alone!" she finishes, in a vexed tone.

"If I had only known—but, of course, I imagined Adrian——"

"You don't think anything can have happened to him, Guy?" asks Milly, anxiously.

"How fond she is of him!" he thinks, bitterly.

"I suspect he can take care of himself—I daresay he is dining with some one. By-the-way, now I think of it, he told me he had met Vansittart this morning; they are very old chums, you know."

Milly bites her lip. She is so fond of Adrian that the least slight from him wounds her to the quick.

"Well," she says, forcing a smile, "and what have you been doing?—have you, too, found an old chum? Oh! I forgot; of course, you have been to call on your pretty little friend whom we met in the Louvre this morning."

Guy draws a chair close to his sister-in-law, and, looking at her, says suddenly,

"I am going to confide in you, Milly; I want your advice."

"Yes, do tell me," she answers, with the ready interest and sympathy that is one of her greatest charms.

"I am going to be married."

"You?"

Milly preserves her countenance admirably, but his words give her a shock. She had known that he was fond of her, and though not aware of the depth of his love for her, was still certain of being dear to him.

Perhaps she has regretted it—certainly she feels nothing more for him than her relationship as his brother's wife warrants; but it is, after all, rather pleasant than otherwise to have an utterly devoted slave, who asks nothing more than to be at the beck and call of the adored one, and to make everything as smooth and pleasant as possible for her.

Neither can any woman reconcile it to herself that a man who loves her can entertain the idea of marrying another woman; so when he does, she generally tells herself that she has been mistaken in believing him to be really fond of her, and feels a little angry with herself, and somewhat aggrieved with him.

"Of course it is nothing to her. She does not care!" Guy is thinking, with some bitterness, whilst Milly is striving sedulously, and succeeding very well, in concealing her chagrin.

"Can you guess to whom?"

"Not to your friend of this morning?"

"Yes; why not?" he asks, a little sharply.

"I don't know," Milly answers. "Somehow I fancied she was the property of that nice, gentlemanly-looking man who was with her."

"H'm! I don't think there was anything very *nice*-looking about him," he says, grimly.

"Oh! I did, Guy. He had such a gentle manner, and looked so sad about the eyes and mouth, as though he had had some great trouble. Indeed, I did not fancy he seemed very happy this morning."

"Women are more observant than men, I suppose," is the rather rough retort. "I was not particularly struck with Captain Etherege in any way."

"Etherege! Etherege!" repeated Milly;  
"was he ever in the —th?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't you remember about his wife?"

"No; what about her?"

"She was a horrid woman; he was divorced from her. I remember her quite well."

"I don't suppose she had much of a time with him," says Guy.

"Indeed, you are quite wrong. What makes you so prejudiced, Guy? Are you jealous of him?"

"No, certainly not," he answers, heartily and truthfully.

"He was devoted to her—goodness itself; and she—well, never mind; we won't talk about her."

"I wonder which is the worst," says Guy, looking intently into the fire, as if to read an answer there—"to break your heart after what you want and cannot get, or to get it and let it break *your* heart?"

"I do not know," Milly answers, looking into the fire too, with a very sad inflexion



in her voice. "Oh!" she adds, with sudden enthusiasm, "if one could only have what one loves in this world, and not be disappointed by it, what better Heaven would any of us want?"

"Ay," answers Guy, in a low voice—"what indeed!"

Both are thinking of their own case. Milly recovers herself the first.

"Come," she says, gaily, "I am waiting for your romance."

"It is almost a romance," Guy answers; "it wouldn't make half a bad novel. But I am going to ask you a question first."

"Ask on."

"Do you ever remember to have seen Dolores before?"

"Dolores!—what a pretty name! No. Why?"

"Think."

Milly thinks. "There is something familiar in her face. But—stay," and she looks for a moment curiously and intently

at Guy—"surely not!"—and she hesitates and reddens a little with the fear of being indiscreet.

"Surely yes. I think you have it," he answers. "You need not be afraid to speak. I assure you there is no delicate ground."

"How long ago is it since I might have seen her?" Milly interrogates, cautiously.

"Two days after I first met you."

"Then I know," and she looks a little strangely at him. "Well, Guy?"

"Yes, I know it sounds odd," he answers, frowning a little; "but it won't when I have told you all. I know some women would shrug their shoulders and raise their eyebrows, but not you, Milly—not you," he repeats, looking very earnestly at her.

Not to forfeit her brother-in-law's good opinion, Milly does not outwardly do either, but mentally she does both very much indeed. She remembers Guy's sudden dis-

appearance, and Adrian's laughing and mysterious manner when questioned by the Vivians; and, in spite of his passionate declaration of love for herself on his return after three days' absence, she had always thought there was something connected with his sudden disappearance that had better not be inquired into too minutely.

"It would be a difficult story to tell to anyone but you," Guy continues, almost pleadingly—"in fact, I *could not* tell anyone else the exact truth of the story, for her sake as much as mine, but to you I will tell it word for word, as I know it myself."

"You know you may rely upon me," she answers, very kindly and softly.

"I know I may. God bless you!"

He takes her hand, and presses it fervently, almost reverently.

"Well, then, when I went to Normandy last Spring, I was walking along a most

picturesque and tumbledown old street in Rouen, with a view to sketching it, when I met one of the prettiest little girls I thought I had ever seen, accompanied by an elderly Frenchwoman—just one of those stout, clean, comely-looking women, the very type of attached domestic and friend-of-the-family sort, you know, Milly. Well, I immediately wanted to sketch her.”

“What, the attached domestic?” laughs Milly.

“No, the girl. So I followed them up the hill—a good stiff one, too, that made the fat servant puff and blow and chide the girl, who seemed as frolicsome as a kitten. I was afraid the old party would be rather a dragon; but I followed at a respectful distance, and by just arriving opportunely at the garden-gate, and reaching the key, which had fallen on the grass, and so preventing Marcelline having to walk an additional half-mile, I crept into conversation and favour; and the end of it was, I was

allowed to enter, not only then, but several times afterwards, to sketch Dolores, who put me very much in mind of the 'Cruche Cassée.' What do you think? Don't you see a likeness?"

"Yes, but your Dolores is prettier," says Milly, magnanimously.

"Oh yes, a thousand times!" assents Guy, heartily.

"Well, but tell me, Guy, was she living all alone with the servant?"

"Only for the moment. Her mother had gone to England on business, and I was given to understand that, had she been at home, small chance should I have stood of putting foot inside the gate."

"And where is her mother now?"

"Dead, a few months ago."

"Do you know who she was, or anything about her?"

"Not a syllable; nor does anyone else, as far as I can make out. There is some mystery."

"How unfortunate !" Mrs. Charteris cannot help saying. The more she hears, the less she likes the idea of Guy's proposed marriage.

"Yes, it is a nuisance, certainly," Guy answers, biting his lip. It begins to look rather unsatisfactory to him, too. "All that is known of Mrs. Power is that she went to live at Rouen some thirteen or fourteen years ago, and lived a most secluded life. At her death, which was sudden, no clue could be found to her identity. Etherege did all he could to trace it, but even her lawyers knew nothing about her or her antecedents ; I heard all this from Dolores to-night. Still, I suppose as the man you have such a high opinion of was content to take her on trust, you will not blame me for doing the same?"

"But, my dear Guy, yours is a very different case. Your position makes it a much more important matter whom you

marry than whom Captain Etherege chooses. Besides, of course, through his unhappy position, though not a particle of blame attaches to him, many women would think twice before consenting to be his wife."

Milly is a woman of the world; she knows nothing of Dolores, has no possible interest in her; but she is fond of Guy, and, besides, he is the head of the family, so she may be pardoned for not entering very heartily into a scheme in which she sees no advantage to him in any way.

"Are you so deeply in love, then?" she continues, as he makes no answer.

"No!" looking at her for a moment, and then away again, "it is not that. She is a dear sweet little thing. I am sure it would be impossible to live with, and not to love her; still——"

"Still what?"

"When I have finished my story you will know. I had been nearly a fortnight

in Rouen, going up almost every day to make my sketch, when one day Marcelline came down to the hotel to see me, and begged me to go away, because the child was getting fond of me. She was rather excited, blamed herself for having allowed me to go to the house at all, appealed to my feelings, and finally extorted a promise from me to leave Rouen at once, without seeing my little model again. Milly," he says, breaking off suddenly, "I can see, by the expression of your face, that you think it was all a plant; but you don't know Marcelline. She is the best creature that ever lived."

"My dear Guy, I did not know you were a thought-reader!" says Milly, laughing. "And you know it would be quite in character with the attached domestic to make a good match for her young mistress."

"Now, Milly, don't be like other women," utters Guy, reproachfully. "That is just like Mrs. Vivian."



"I won't offend again," she answers, penitently, "but you must forgive me if all my interest in this story is centred in you."

Guy's face brightens.

"How well you understand the art of saying pleasant things," he says. "Well, I went away. Of course I thought it quite absurd, but still I went; and then you know, Milly," he added, pausing, "that night we were dining with the Vivians. Do you remember my being called out of the room?"

"Perfectly," she says, with intense interest.

Another longer pause.

"Poor little darling," says Guy, in a low, tender voice, "how little she dreamed what a foolish thing she was doing! She had followed me here, not even knowing my address, nor having ever been in Paris before."

"Alone?" Milly asks, holding her breath.

"Yes, poor little soul! She had escaped

from Marcelline, and come off alone to Paris. By the most wonderful and merciful intervention of Providence, she met Stevens, and he brought her here at once."

"Well, Guy?" (impatiently).

"Well, Milly, I think you may guess the rest. I sent Stevens off to tell Marcelline at once, and took the poor little thing back next morning by the first train."

Milly puts her hand in his; there are tears in her beautiful eloquent eyes; no need for her to speak her thoughts.

"Any other man would have done the same," he says, hastily.

"Not *every* other," she replies.

"I should have married her then and there, only—" But remembering, he leaves his sentence unfinished; nor does Milly ask for the remainder.

Her womanly sympathy is aroused. "Poor little thing!" she murmurs softly.

"And so," he proceeds, "I stayed a day or two in Rouen, to pacify the poor

little girl, and then I came back here."

Another, longer pause, broken at last by Milly.

"But, Guy, how came she to be engaged to Captain Etherege?"

"He went to stay at Rouen some little time afterwards with his sister, and met her in the church several times—and, don't think me a conceited fool for telling you, Milly, he saved her from drowning herself."

"Poor little soul!—how fond she must have been of you!"

"Yes, it seems strange, doesn't it?" he says, half laughing, half bitter.

"Guy," says Milly, looking at him with grave eyes, in which there is some reproach.

"I beg your pardon," he answers hastily, "I will not offend again."

"Then," suggests Milly, "he fell in love with her and proposed to marry her. But, Guy, if she was so devoted to you, how came she to accept him?"

"I hardly know," he says, hesitating. "I suppose he was kind to her, and she had not much to look forward to."

"But, Guy," asks his companion, practically, "where is the sister? Miss Power is surely not staying in Paris alone with Captain Etherege?"

"Oh! no," he answers hastily, and frowning a little; "Marcelline is with her."

"*Toujours la fidèle Marcelline.* But," she adds, persistently, "where is the sister?"

"Upon my life, I never thought to ask!" replies Guy, with some embarrassment.

"Tell me what happened after our strange *rencontre* this morning. Did Captain Etherege at once give up all claim, and hand her over to you?"

"You see," says Guy, thoughtfully, "he knew the first part of the story, and I suppose he thought it was rather hopeless to marry a woman who liked another man."

"Tell me about your interview," Milly says, impatiently. "Did he say 'Bless

you, my children,' or did he seem to feel it very much?"

Guy looks puzzled.

"He did not betray much feeling, certainly; but, with those cold, self-contained fellows, you never can tell what they really suffer."

Whence Milly draws the conclusion that Captain Etherege is not so very sorry to be relieved from his engagement, and is less satisfied than ever with Guy's proposed marriage.

"In fact," proceeds the young man, "I should never for one instant have dreamed of standing in his way, only he drew such a picture of what the poor child had suffered, that I felt in honour bound almost. But she is a dear, sweet little thing," he breaks off, as though conscious of doing her wrong, "and I am sure to be very happy with her."

"And I suppose you mean to marry her at once?"

"Yes, as soon as possible. I want your help, Milly; I know I *may* ask you."

"Anything in the world," she says, heartily.

"I ventured to say you would go to her to-morrow, and bring her here."

"Here!" echoes Milly.

"Is there anything against it?" he asks, looking up.

Mrs. Charteris does not answer immediately.

"Well, Milly?"

"I hardly like to say it, Guy, but—but does it not occur to you that it might be as well for her not to come here?" Seeing him look puzzled, she adds—"Is it not just possible that some of the servants here might remember her, and you know how they talk!"

"You are quite right, as you always are. But what am I to do with her until I get the ceremony performed? I thought,

if she were with you for a fortnight or so, that would stop people's mouths."

"That would not do it; and do you know, Guy, I think seriously it will be a great mistake if you get married in such a violent hurry."

"It *must* be done!" he answers, resolutely.

"There is no must about it," she retorts. "It will be an injustice to herself as well as to you. Listen a moment while I give you my reasons."

Guy settles himself in his chair, as if prepared to hear his sister-in-law talk for any amount of time; but there is a certain fixed expression about the corners of his mouth, as though he is not likely to be convinced that his own plan is not the better one.

## CHAPTER XI.

## WHAT MILLY THINKS.

**F**IFTY objections to the marriage crowded into Milly's brain; every moment the idea seemed more hateful in her eyes. It was a miserable sacrifice, that Guy was rushing on blindly from a mistaken sense of honour, a Quixotic chivalry. And not only was he about to commit a fatal error, but to set about it in a manner that would probably injure the happiness of his whole future. She felt almost indignant at his folly; in her own mind she could not refrain from thinking that he was the dupe of Dolores and the French



servant. Certainly the story, as told unconsciously by Guy, tended to such a conclusion ; and although we are in full possession of the facts, Mrs. Charteris was not, and very naturally formed an idea that Guy's sensitive nature had been imposed upon, and that he is about miserably to throw himself away from a mistaken sense of honour. And if he married her in this hot haste, what would the world say, or, rather, what would it not say?—what would Guy's mother think, and what story would she be able herself to tell plausible enough to satisfy society on the subject of his choice? She feels almost angry with him for having brought about this dilemma ; but there is no anger in her voice as, bending forward, her cheek resting on her hand, she begins softly to urge upon him her convictions.

“My dear Guy, have you thought yet what you are going to give out to the world as to Lady Wentworth's history?

You will hardly tell them what you have told me, will you?"

"Most certainly not," he answers, emphatically. "Why tell them anything? Who has a right to ask, except my own family?"

"But the moment you resent the world's questioning, the world takes upon itself to find its own answer; and that answer is invariably the very last one you would give, or wish given, yourself."

"What could anyone dare to say?" he commences, indignantly.

"Of course," replies Milly, softly, "you and I know perfectly"—she says this with a secret qualm—"that not a syllable could justly be breathed against your future wife; but you must admit there are one or two circumstances which, if open to the criticism of your friends, are not so satisfactory as we could altogether wish. Nay, Guy"—for he makes an impatient movement,—“you know I would not pain you;

I am only speaking to you as your mother would, were she here this moment."

"I will keep her abroad for a year, until people have forgotten to ask any questions."

"Why do that? You must be anxious to see your own country and Wentworth again; you have been away from it too long already."

"Tell me, then, Milly,—what do you propose?"

"I cannot quite answer that at this moment; I want you to give me a night to think about it. But I do urge your not dreaming of an immediate marriage. It would be a great blow to your mother, set everyone talking in the county, and perhaps make your wife's position doubtful, instead of her being at once able to take her own place. Don't you agree with me so far?"

"Yes," he answers, reluctantly.

"Suppose, now," with a sudden inspira-

tion, "that I were to dine at the *table-d'hôte* of a certain hotel to-morrow—that I were to sit next a charming young girl, to whom I took the greatest fancy; suppose I continued the acquaintance, and became so fond of her that I asked her to go over to England and stay with me. You naturally, being constantly with us, fall in love with my little friend, and, eventually, propose to her. She will, of course, be invited to Wentworth, to stay with your mother; and, in three months from the present time, what is to prevent your marrying a young lady whom the world knows all about? For it will not be very difficult to make a true story about her orphaned condition. What do you think of the idea, Guy?"

"Think! I think you are the cleverest woman in the world!"

"Then, for Stevens," she says, pausing—  
—"well, you must caution him alluding to the past, or seeming  
nise either Miss Power or her

and, above all things, tell him to keep it from my maid, because I am not to be supposed to know anything about the past."

Guy drums on the floor with one foot, and frowns a little.

"Yes," proceeds Milly, "I know it is hateful to you to have recourse to deception of any kind, but just think, Guy, for her sake, whether you can afford to brave everything, and act quite straightforwardly. You see, the Vivians know of your having been in Rouen last year; they know about some one coming to you in Paris, and your going back again to Rouen. Mrs. Vivian is not an ill-natured woman, but she is inquisitive, and fond of gossip; and, if there is a clue to unravel, will do her best to get to the bottom of it."

"But, my dear Milly, how do you suppose for one instant that the fact of her having lived in Rouen all her life is to be kept a secret?"

"I never dreamed of such a thing for an instant. But hark! there is Adrian. May I tell him?"

"I suppose so; he must know sooner or later; but not before me. And, Milly," he adds, hurriedly, "tell him not to chaff me about it—I couldn't stand it."

"I will mature my plans, and we will talk them over in the morning."

The door opens, and Adrian comes in, looking handsomer than ever, if a little more bored and languid.

Milly is one of those who only get angry with people that are very dear to them. She has a grand armour of pride to protect her from the petty stings of life; but once she loves, that one to whom her heart is given has the power of wounding her to the very quick—a power so great that it may easily be abused without design. This is, at the same time, her greatest fault and her greatest misfortune. The intonation of a voice, a cold or wandering

glance, a *distracted* answer, can make her unhappy, a slight neglect or sharp retort cause her to feel passionately indignant and miserable. She is as irrational and unreasonable in her love as she is sensible and discreet in every other matter. With the whole force of her nature she loves Adrian—not a whit the less because she does not respect him, because she knows him for what he is—an utterly selfish man. Too indolent to be ill-tempered, too fond of himself easily to allow anything to put him out, always ready to be kind and pleasant when it does not inconvenience himself, and with a charming grace in refusing to do what he does not care for, that makes his refusal almost as good as other people's compliance.

Milly has a passion for good looks; it is a real pleasure to her to look at a handsome face, and she can gratify this taste perfectly with her husband, who is eminently handsome, and so perfectly aware

of it that he would consider it beneath him to appear conceited. Guy is "quite good-looking enough for anything," as his friends say, but he has now and then felt a twinge of envy at seeing how irresistible his brother's handsome face is in the eyes of most women.

"I daresay Dolores won't think much of me when she has seen him," is his mental comment, as Captain Charteris comes in, looking more splendidly handsome even than usual.

There is something irresistible about the smiling eyes, the curved mouth that the golden moustache shades, but does not hide. At the bare sight of him Milly's wrath melts like snow before the sun, her eyes shine a welcome on him, her own face becomes radiant—"and beautiful too," Guy thinks.

"Well, Guy, what have you been about?" Adrian says, not even noticing his wife, whose face falls, and whose heart gives a



little indignant throb. He does not apologise for having left her, nor ask if her head is better; and her anger begins to return.

"I sent Stevens to you, but he said you were not to be disturbed on any account. What were you doing?—composing a valentine or a love-letter, or taking a nap—eh? Why, how glum you both look! What's up, Milly?"

"Oh! nothing," she returns coldly, looking away from him.

"We had a deuced good dinner; you had better have come with me," pursues Captain Charteris, not noticing, or appearing to notice, his wife's displeasure. "Where did you dine?"

"I did not know you were going to dine out," answers Guy, "so I dined alone at a place in the Rue Richelieu."

"Well, Milly, and what did you do?" he asks, with a yawn.

"I dined alone, which, as you know, I

am particularly fond of doing," says Milly.

"Oh! I didn't think you'd dine at all; people don't, generally, when they have a headache."

"You might have left word you were going out," she returns, trying not to be angry.

"I did not know, when I saw Fentum, that I *was* going out; but when I heard from her that you were not to be disturbed, and the same from Guy's man about him, I went and found Vansittart, and we dined together. Capital dinner!—deuced dear, though!" and he pulls out the bill of fare, and hands it to his brother.

"Ninety-five francs," Guy reads to himself, and inwardly comments, "Hang it all! if I owed nearly all my money to my wife, I think I'd be a trifle less lavish with it."

But, to do Milly justice, as long as Adrian is good to her, she begrudges him nothing, and is perfectly willing to deny

herself, that he may have everything he wants. Adrian accepts it all as his due, and does not see any particular generosity in his wife's handing over everything she has into his keeping with unquestioning confidence. If she had not had money, he would certainly not have married her; and already he considers that he has made an enormous sacrifice in giving up his freedom, for which her fortune, were it ten times as great, could not compensate.

"I suppose you were having a very interesting conversation, and I interrupted it?" says Adrian, with a yawn. "It's only half-past eleven,"—looking at his watch—"but, as there is nothing else to do, I may as well go to bed—Unless you'll come out for a stroll?" he adds, turning to Guy.

But Guy, seeing that Milly is vexed, says he is tired, and does not care to go out again; and so, wishing them good-night, he goes.

Milly wants to tell her husband the news

of Guy's engagement, but she is angry with him, and can hardly command her voice sufficiently to begin. If he would only say a kind word, or express a regret at having left her to dine alone, she could be pleasant again directly ; but he takes a book and begins to read. It is his theory that, if a woman is out of temper (and he has rarely had anything but pleasant looks from them, except an occasional outburst of jealousy), the only thing is to leave her quite alone until she comes round. As to a quarrel, a scene, or an explanation, it would be far too much trouble ; besides, it would never enter his brain to imagine he could be in the wrong. He does not understand Milly the least in the world, and is of opinion that she has the "devil's own temper," as he expresses it ; but he has heard that most married women have the same, so the only thing is to keep out of her way until she gets over it.

Milly begins herself to think that she is

bad-tempered; scarcely a day passes but Adrian vexes her in some way, and although she tries hard to conceal the bitterness she feels, she loves him too much not to resent what she thinks unkindness or neglect on his part. Milly was too exacting, and Adrian was the last man in the world to suit a woman of her temperament. She told herself this a thousand times in the day; but it was additionally bitter to her from the fact that she had been used to receive willing homage and attention. She had been spoiled and flattered by a dozen men who had been only too happy to humour her least caprice; and until her marriage with Adrian, she had looked upon all their acts of devotion as only her right and due. Captain Charteris was charming in society, but he could not be bored by playing at company-manners at home. It was absurd to expect a man to open the door or ring the bell for his wife, or otherwise make a lackey of himself.

Milly, who had been used to all the *petits soins* that a woman values, felt that the absence of them betokened a want of affection on her husband's part. Since Guy had been with them, he had been so thoughtful and courteous to her, almost reading her wishes, and only too happy if he could satisfy the least of them.

Captain Charteris watched his brother with some amusement.

"Ah! my dear fellow," he would say, with his indolent smile, "it's very jolly waiting upon other people's wives. I don't mind that myself; but wait till you get one of your own."

And now she was going to lose Guy too, and she began to think of a thousand virtues and good qualities in him that had scarcely struck her much until now. Adrian *must* be told, so she will endeavour to ignore her wrongs and commence. Try as she may, she cannot summon up quite a good grace.

"Adrian!"

"Well?" he answers, not looking up.

"Is your book so *very* interesting?"

"Yes, rather."

"More interesting than my conversation?"

"A good deal more."

"Thank you. Perhaps you take some interest in your brother's affairs?"

"Not particularly," he answers, still reading.

"He is going to be married," says Milly, quietly.

"The deuce he is!" Adrian exclaims, looking at her. "What an infernal fool! Whom to?"

"It is rather a long story," she answers, trying to swallow her anger. "Perhaps you would rather continue your book?"

"No, I should not. I would rather hear your story," he adds, smiling graciously.

"Come and tell me."

Milly is weak. When her sovereign lord

holds out the sceptre to her, she can only prostrate herself at his feet. So she rises, and going to him seats herself on the arm of his chair.

"Adrian," she says, caressingly, "you know it was not kind of you to go out and leave me alone to-day."

"Oh! I thought you would be sure to have Guy; and you know he waits upon you and looks after you much better than I do. But tell me, whom is he going to marry?"

"You know I told you at lunch about our meeting a girl in the Louvre who had a fainting fit."

"Yes."

"He is going to marry her."

"But who is she? Where did he meet her? How long has he known her?"

For Guy's sake Milly wants to make the best of the story; but, as she proceeds, she feels every moment that it is more and more unsatisfactory. During its progress



her husband interpolates many ejaculations of contempt and derision. At its close he gives a prolonged whistle.

"Guy always was the biggest fool about women," he comments. "I thought he would end by some such scrape as this. Rather an interesting addition to the family—the new sister-in-law, eh, Milly?"

"She may be very nice," Milly answers, "and she is certainly pretty."

"If I were you, I wouldn't be dragged into it—let Guy manage it as best he can, if he is such an ass."

"I don't think that would be wise; the only thing we have to do, since he is bent upon it, is to make the best of it."

"I don't see there's any best to be made about it. You can't prevent the whole thing coming out one day, and then nobody will have two opinions about her. I don't doubt it's all right, because I know what Guy is—but you won't make anybody else believe it."

"We shall see," replies Milly, with feminine astuteness. "You see if we were to oppose it, he would have nothing to do but to marry her at once; whereas, if we delay it, it is just possible," she says, hesitating, "that he may change his mind."

"I see. You are a clever woman, Milly, but I rather doubt if you are a match for the *ingénue* and the old Frenchwoman."

"Perhaps not. I have no idea of any scheming and counter-scheming. My only wish is for your brother's welfare."

"Very good of you. And it would be rather a bore to lose such a useful slave, eh, Milly?" and Adrian goes off laughing, thinking he has divined his wife's thoughts very cleverly. After he was gone, Milly sits thinking intently, until her maid comes to see whether she means to sit up all night. By this time her plans are tolerably matured, and after breakfast, the following morning, she is able to detail them for Guy's benefit. She has also extracted from

her husband a promise not to interfere in any way with her projects, and to observe the strictest silence about his previous meeting with her in Paris, as well as to refrain from betraying to Dolores herself any recollection of having seen her before.

## CHAPTER XII.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES HAPPINESS ?

“**D**O you know, Guy,” says Milly, to her brother-in-law the next morning, “I think the best thing I could do would be to see Captain Etherege. It would be better for the world not to know anything about his engagement to Miss Power, and I feel sure—oh! quite sure,” (emphatically,) “that he would be as little likely as you to say anything to the detriment of a woman, but I am a little afraid of his sister, and——”

“I fear it is too late,” breaks in Guy. “In his letter he says he shall be in Paris up to ten this morning, and,” he adds,

taking out his watch, "it is that now."

"You might go at once, before breakfast; and if you told him I was very desirous to see him, I daresay he would put off his departure for an hour or two. It is most important," she continues, anxiously, "that I should see him; and then, later on, you can explain to your *fiancée* that it will be better for me not to go to her and bring her back here to-day."

Guy takes his hat obediently and goes, though he likes neither of his missions. He does not want to meet Captain Etherege again, and how is he to tell Dolores that she cannot openly and at once be received in her proper position by his family? If he had not such a high opinion of Milly's prudence and discretion, he would like to have things his own way, and run all risks for the future. But Milly has put it on the highest ground—his duty towards Dolores—and he cannot help seeing that she is right.

"How good she was about it!" he reflects, as he goes along. "Most women would have made themselves disagreeable, and insinuated all sorts of things; because, after all, it does sound a strange story in the telling, and a woman who was not pure-minded like Milly might make evil out of it. Bless her!" he thought, sighing, "I had rather have seen her married to most of my friends than Adrian. I hate him sometimes, when I see his manner towards her, and how fond she is of him! A woman like that, that I should have been so proud of, should have worshipped so, to be valued only for her money! Would to God I had met her before her first marriage, when she had none! But I suppose she would never have cared for me. Women don't care for the men who would be good to them, and love them!" he says bitterly to himself.

It is with no eager heart or step that the affianced lover turns in at the doorway

of the hotel where his betrothed is staying; and when the porter tells him that Captain Etherege has left the previous night, he breathes more freely. And now for the interview with Dolores, which he foresees will be a little difficult.

He finds her sitting before an untasted roll and cup of coffee—Marcelline by the window at work. The latter rises, makes him a curtsy, and prepares to withdraw, but he detains her.

"No need to run away, Marcelline. You know we can talk all our secrets without being afraid of your understanding us."

This is not very lover-like, Marcelline thinks, and Dolores feels it too, and the colour comes into her cheeks as she bends over her coffee and pretends to drink it.

Guy takes her hands in his, and looks very kindly at her.

"You are looking quite charming this morning, Dolores!"

"Am I?" she says, in a pleased voice.

"Isn't she, Marcelline?" he says, repeating his remark in French. And Marcelline smiles and nods in answer. "You will have to learn English now you are going to live in England," pursues Guy, taking it for granted that where Dolores goes there will her faithful servant attend her.

"Milor is very good," she answers, "but as for leaving France——" And she finishes her sentence with a doubtful shake of the head.

"I am not Milor, Marcelline," laughs the young man, "only plain Sir Guy. And, you know, if you don't come to England, we shall have to settle in France. I am sure your little lady will never consent to part from you."

"Ah! Sir Guy is joking the poor old woman. Her little angel will be only too glad to be rid of a cross old servant, who has done nothing all her life but contradict her."

Dolores smiles and shakes her head.



"Cunning old Marcelline! You want me to flatter you, and to tell Sir Guy that I should die without you."

"I hear Captain Etherege has gone," says Guy, presently. "I was in hopes of finding him."

"For what?" asks the child, blankly.

"My sister-in-law, Mrs. Charteris, wanted to see him. Do you know if he has left Paris?"

"Yes, he has gone. But why should Mrs. Charteris want to see him?" she asks, suspiciously.

"I am not quite in the secret," answers Guy, evasively; "but, since he is gone, it is of course impossible."

"And Madame, your sister, is she coming here this morning?"

"No-o," he says, hesitating, "not this morning. She thinks—we think——"

"Sir Guy," interrupts Dolores, in a constrained voice, "do you object to my asking Marcelline to quit the room?"

"Certainly not, dearest; but——"

"Marcelline," she pursues, with quiet dignity, "will you be so good as to leave us for a few minutes?"

"But—certainly," and the good soul retires with great alacrity. Frenchwoman though she is, she has no scruples about leaving her young charge with her affianced husband. Marcelline has an immense respect for and confidence in Englishmen.

Dolores contains herself until the door has closed, and then bursts out, with quivering lips and flashing eyes—

"I understand all, Sir Guy. Your sister does not wish you to marry me; she has been persuading you from it; she has refused to receive me. I am quite content; you are free. I am certain that you only pretend to love me from kindness—as I told you yesterday, from pity. I never wish to see you any more, and I pray you do me the kindness to leave me."

Guy gives vent to an impatient sigh ; he is not in the humour to fight over again the uphill that he conquered last night, and he says, with slight irritation,

“Why, what a foolish little girl it is ! Why cannot you be reasonable, Dolores ? At all events, let me finish. Come, darling,” and he suddenly relents, as he sees the great tears standing in her eyes, and goes towards her to put his arm round her. She shakes him off impatiently.

“Proceed, Monsieur—I am listening.”

But Guy does not find it in the very least easy to proceed. He feels that in her present touchy, sensitive mood he will only be adding fuel to the fire by giving his sister's reasons for not going to her at once.

“My sister is not quite recovered from her headache, and——” he stammers.

“You have just thought of that for an excuse,” says Dolores, looking steadily at

him. "Why not tell me the truth? I am not afraid to hear it."

And, indeed, it is the little maiden who looks formidable now, and the fine big young man who is the coward. He is divided between two feelings—the fear of wounding Dolores, and the horror of not being perfectly frank and straightforward. But, after a moment's hesitation, he resolves to tell her the truth as tenderly as possible.

"My dear," he says, sitting down by her, "though you are the sweetest and most charming little woman in the world, you cannot be expected, living in a place like Rouen all your life, to know a great deal about the ways of the world and society; and so, darling, you know you must be content to trust a little to people who do. When you are Lady Wentworth, or people know you are about to be so, a great many of my friends and acquaintances will want to know all about you—

where I met you, how I came to be introduced to you—in short, people are so inquisitive, they want to know everything about everybody.”

“And you,” says Dolores, with quick perception, “will be ashamed to tell them.”

“Why should I be ashamed, darling?” he answers, in the frankest, truthfullest voice—“what have you given me cause for except to feel most proud and grateful for your love? Only——”

He pauses, and a deep crimson blush suffuses the girl's whole face. She tries to hide it with her small white hands.

“Oh, yes,” she cries, ashamedly, “I know—I know! If people knew how foolishly, how wickedly I had behaved, how bold and forward I had seemed, they would think I know not what. But you,” she adds, imploringly, with eyes downcast, and tremulous mouth—“*you* do not think ill of me? Even Philip did not when I confessed it to him.”

"I! my own darling! what do you take me for?" and he kisses her hands with some passion; "what could I feel but proud to think so pure and sweet a creature could care so much for me? No, dearest, do not for one instant think I misunderstand you; it is for your sake only that I would keep our secret from the world, which is always harsh and false in its judgments."

"Guy," she says, imploringly, "*you have not told your sister?*"

"How could I help it, dearest?" he answers, uneasily. You forget my brother saw you. But," he says, hastily, "you need have no fear of my sister knowing all, she is too pure-minded herself to impute harm to other women."

"Ah," says Dolores, with instinctive jealousy, "I no longer wish to see Mrs. Charteris. I am glad she has not come. And Mary is coming to-day. I know she will be good to me, even though I have

behaved with such ingratitude to poor Philip."

"Is Miss Etherege coming?" Guy asks, "and does she know——"

"How should she know? You forget it is only since yesterday, though," she says, with a sigh "it seems much longer. I have her letter here," (drawing it from her pocket); "she says her sister has taken a wonderful turn for the better, and as her mind mis-gives her that she ought not to have left us all to ourselves in Paris, she is coming, and will be in Paris to-night."

Guy draws a long breath of relief.

"I am very glad," he says very heartily. "And Mrs. Charteris will be very glad too. She will come to-morrow and see Miss Etherege, I know, and after that I hope all will be plain-sailing. And now, darling, put on your bonnet, and I will send for a carriage, and we will go out shopping, as we did at Rouen that day, and take Marcelline with us, too."

The child shakes her head mournfully.

"No, it is better to say adieu, and leave me. I will go back to Rouen with Mary, and," she adds, her voice faltering, "I shall ask one of the good sisters whom I know, to take me into the Convent."

"No, my sweet," answers the young man, taking her in his arms, "so dear a thing as you was never meant to be buried in a living grave. Please God, you shall see the bright side of life, and know what happiness and pleasure there is in the world. What, tears again! Come, I shall begin to think you do not care for me."

"I wish—I wish I hated you," says the child, almost passionately.

Guy laughs.

"I will not believe you. And all this time," he says, trying to divert her thoughts, "I have forgotten that Mrs. Charteris is waiting to know about Captain Etherege, and that I have not had my breakfast. Well," he adds, taking his hat, "I shall be back



in half-an-hour with a carriage, and shall expect to find you and Marcelline quite ready. *Au revoir, my darling.*"

Thus he goes ; and after a few minutes, Dolores, making up her mind to obedience, summons Marcelline, and when Guy returns he finds them both prepared for the drive.

"Are you still as fond of bon-bons?" he says gaily, and orders the coachman to drive to a confectioner's in the Rue de la Paix.

Then he takes her to the jeweller's, and buys her a half hoop of diamonds ; and as she takes her glove off to try if it fits her, she remembers with a blush that Philip's ring is still there. She fears Guy will be vexed, but he says very kindly,

"We must put that on the other hand." Then he buys her a basketful of choice flowers, and an inlaid box of gloves. "We must not forget Marcelline," he says ; and they stop and purchase a beautiful lace

cap, to her overwhelming delight. "Now come and help me to choose a present for my sister-in-law," says Sir Guy. "I don't know what to give her—she has everything."

"These are beautiful fans!" says Dolores, timidly pointing to a window they were passing.

"The very thing! What a clever little woman! Ladies can never have too many of those." And going in, he selects a film of lace on carved mother-of-pearl sticks—a dainty toy, just fit, he thinks, for so elegant a creature as Milly.

After this he takes them to the Palais Royal, and gives them a sumptuous lunch, and insists on Marcelline partaking of everything, although she is painfully shy at eating with her young lady and the English milord. Guy sees her diffidence, and good-naturedly makes her sit at an adjoining table, where she soon gets the better of her *mauvaise honte*.

In the afternoon they drive in the Bois. Dolores is quite happy. She has forgotten her doubts about Guy—forgotten, too, that there is a man who has been kinder to her than ever Guy has, fleeing away from sight and hearing of her, as fast as steam can take him, but carrying with him, as he will for many a long day, bitter memory and regret of her.

Guy, too, has forgotten him. He is well pleased that the charming little figure beside him is to be his own property. What a sweet little “my lady” she will make! He is agreeably conscious, too, that she attracts a good deal of attention from both sexes, although her toilette is of the very simplest. It pleases him to think how he will make Milly take her to all the best places, and have her equipped as sumptuously as a little duchess; and then, remembering that this will not accord with his sister-in-law’s plans, he frowns a vexed frown.

"Why can't one be happy one's own way? What a cursed nuisance society is!" he groans to himself. But, after all, the impediments in the way make him prize his little *fiancée* more.

The happy day is over. Dolores is back in her room at the hotel, and Guy is taking leave of her.

"I wish you would stay with me," she says, wistfully. "In two hours Mary will be here, and oh! what shall I say to her?"

"Say?" replies Guy, cheerily—"say? Why, say——" but here he pauses, not finding it altogether easy to make a suggestion.

The girl looks inquiringly at him. Guy clasps his hands round the handle of his umbrella, from which he is as loth to part as most men, and looks hard at it, as if some happy inspiration might come from contemplation of it.

"It is awkward," he confesses presently, rather gloomily.

"Don't you think," says Dolores, laying a timid hand on his arm—"don't you think *you* might tell her?"

"I!" rising hurriedly—"I, my dear little girl!—impossible!"

His mind conjures up a she-dragon. Captain Etherege's sister will probably be a hard, angular old maid, who would take a pleasure in saying things very unpleasant for him to hear, and rather difficult to reply to. But, such being the case, is it fair to leave Dolores to her tender mercies?

"Tell me," he asks, hesitatingly,—“is she *very* severe and awful, this Miss Etherege?” And his face unconsciously elongates, until Dolores cannot help smiling.

"Oh, no, no," she answers; "how could you think so? She is so good—so good; I am quite sure she never said an angry word to anyone in her life. That makes it worse—she will be so grieved. But I shall tell her he was not very unhappy.

He was not—was he?" she asks, looking anxiously at Guy,—“or he would not have given me up so easily.”

“People have such different ways of showing their feelings,” he answers, with a slight shrug. “I don’t think, under the circumstances, *I* should——”

But here he pauses, and the colour deepens in the girl’s cheek.

“Well, dearest,” he concludes, hastily, “I must run away now; and you will write me a little line to-night, and tell me how the interview went off, and whether my sister may call in the morning and see Miss Etherege. Of course,” he adds, with some warmth, “if she gets angry, and makes a scene, we must take you away at once. I won’t have my little pet bullied.”

“Ah!” she says, sighing, “there is no fear of that.”

“Well, good-bye, my darling. I am glad you say you have had a pleasant day;

we will have many much pleasanter ones, please God, when we get through all these confounded proprieties."

She lays her hand lingeringly on his sleeve, her eyes hang upon his face wistfully. A less vain man than Guy might have been pardoned for saying in his heart, "How she loves me!" The thought comes suddenly and grievously across him—"Oh! to be loved like that by the right woman!" And then, smitten with self-reproach for the involuntary infidelity, he stoops and kisses her very tenderly. An intuitive perception seems to come across her, for, fond though the caress is, a pang of disappointment shoots through her heart.

"Good-bye," she says; and there are tears in her eyes.

"Good-bye, my darling; do not forget to write to me to-night. All will be well soon." And, with a cheery smile and nod, he is gone.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

GUY AND ADRIAN.

IT is all over—the story is told—with hesitations, with tears, with pitiful little excuses; and it is heard patiently and painfully by the compassionate sister. She does not blame the child, whose story she knows, and in her heart of hearts she had never thought the marriage quite a suitable one; but even she, who has so firm a faith in an all-wise Providence, cannot but wonder why all these cruel blows should be dealt on Philip, who never in his life, to her knowledge, had caused suffering to any human being.



"But oh! Mary," pleads the girl wistfully, "do you know, I cannot think, after all, he is very sorry to give me up, or he would not have done it so easily and gone away. He did not *seem* very sorry."

Mary is silent. Full well she guesses how keen the pain had been that concealed itself behind the cold, self-contained manner that Dolores could not comprehend.

"Tell me," she says, after a slight pause, "what are your plans for the future? Are you going to be married at once?"

"I do not know," Dolores answers, reddening. "Sir Guy thinks—his sister thinks——"

"His sister?" Mary says, interrogatively.

"Not his own sister—he has none—his brother's wife."

"Is she in Paris?"

"Yes; and she would like," Dolores says, hesitatingly—"would like to see you and talk to you about—oh! Mary, would

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you mind *very* much?" she adds, pleadingly.

Mary Etherege is silent. She is a good woman in the real sense of the word—kind, tender-hearted, charitable; but it is asking a good deal to expect her to enter into arrangements for the marriage of the girl so lately betrothed to her brother, with another man.

"I know it seems a strange, unnatural thing to ask you," Dolores pleads humbly; "but, oh! Mary, I do so dread to meet Mrs. Charteris."

"You have not seen her yet, then?"

"Yes, I have seen her—that day in the Louvre. She was very kind; but—but I do not know why, somehow I feel afraid of her. If only you would see her first, Mary!" And Dolores takes her friend's hand and kisses it, in her pretty, impulsive way.

Many thoughts crowd into Mary's mind; but with her duty, once she recognises it,

always takes the pre-eminence. And here, she tells herself, is this child, motherless, friendless, placed in so strange a position, without anyone to advise her; and must she not banish her own private feelings, and do what she can to secure her happiness in the future? She knows nothing of Sir Guy—in her secret heart she does not think well of him, and it occurs to her that the relations of a man in his position can hardly look with much favour on his marriage with a girl whose antecedents are unknown even to herself. And she thinks sadly how the girl is plunging with such happy confidence into the open sea, all unaware of the reefs and shoals lying thick under the fair water. She sighs—this time it is for the girl's sake.

“Mary,” whispers Dolores, still caressing the hand she holds.

“Yes, I will see her,” answers Miss Etherege, sadly.

“Oh! thanks, dear, dear Mary!” cries

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the child, flinging her arms round her friend's neck; "then I may write and tell him?"

How selfish the young are! Mary Etherege might have made this reflection, but she does not. In her kind heart there is always an ample fund of allowance for human weaknesses, and for those of the young especially. "There is so much suffering and disappointment in the very happiest, brightest lot," she is wont to say; and we make so much more sorrow than need be for each other by want of sympathy and kindness."

"Yes, my dear, you may write; and now, as I am very tired, I will say good night."

"Good night, dear, kind Mary. Oh! how good you are to me; and," she adds, with a sudden burst of contrition, "I have been so ungrateful."

"At least, you did not mean it," Mary answers, kindly, kissing her.

Dolores sits down to pen her note to Guy. She is too shy to write the name without its prefix, though she feels it looks stiff and cold. It takes her a long time and a good deal of paper to write her little effusion, and after all it is a somewhat shy, awkward production. Then she is perplexed how to direct the envelope, and has half a mind to go to Mary Etherege for instruction; but ultimately decides not to disturb her, and sends it off as she thinks right, though with secret misgivings.

Guy smiles as he reads the note.

"Dear little girl," he thinks, "I must get Milly to give her a lesson in writing charming little notes."

Unconsciously almost, but with the tact that characterises *mankind*, he is always saying to himself, "Milly must tell her this; Milly must show her that." A woman is always so pleased and ready to take hints from another whom she suspects of occu-

pying a prominent position in her lover's heart!

Milly is not pleased with the task that awaits her on the morrow. Nevertheless she has given her word, and will not go back from it. She knows Guy is throwing himself away hopelessly; he does not care for the girl—not really care for her. To-night Guy has dined *tête-à-tête* with her, and taken her to the theatre, for Adrian is again dining with his friend Vansittart—they are to have a little *écarté* afterwards. He has not been the least *distract*, does not appear much inclined to speak of his love or future, and indeed has only seemed to have one care—how to please and amuse her, and distract her from thinking of Adrian's absence.

In coming out of the door of the theatre a man had pushed against her, and Guy, ordinarily so quiet, had seized him by the collar, and swung him into the street with

a fury quite disproportionate to the offence. Sometimes when she spoke to him he would turn to her with eyes so expressive of his feelings that she would look away sharply, half vexed, half embarrassed.

"How that man loves me!" she could not help saying to herself, quite dispassionately and sorrowfully. "Why did I not care for him instead of Adrian?" And yet she would not, dared not admit to herself that Adrian did not love her too—it would have broken her heart.

There were a few warm words spoken between the brothers that night. Milly had gone to bed, and Guy was in the sitting-room alone when Adrian came in. He flung himself in a chair, lighted another cigar, and proceeded to discuss the events of the evening.

"Just like my infernal luck!" he said, nonchalantly. "I dropped thirty pounds. Just the sum I promised Milly for her dressmaker, or milliner, or some confound-

ed bill, to-morrow. How cursed extravagant women are !”

Guy began to get a little angry.

“I fancy there is more satisfaction to be got out of paying thirty pounds for a dress for an elegant woman than flinging it away for half an hour’s excitement.”

“*C’est selon !*” answered Adrian, with a shrug. “When you’ve been married a few months you won’t have the remotest idea of how your wife dresses, until you have to pay the bills.”

“My good fellow,” said Guy, with some heat, “it’s all very well for you to waive the fact so delicately, but I think you might remember, when you talk so largely about your wife’s bills, that it’s her own money you condescend to pay them with.”

“Oh ! no, it isn’t,” answered Adrian, lazily ; “it’s mine now. She laid it out on my purchase ; and, upon my soul, I think she has the best of the bargain !”

“I daresay you do,” retorted Guy,



grimly. "I suppose you have something to recommend you—women seem to think so, at least; but, by God!" he adds, passionately, "it is not your manliness or delicacy of feeling, or you would treat such a woman as you have the *honour* to possess a little differently from the way you do."

"Ah, yes, my dear fellow," replied Adrian, languidly. "I know you're in love with my wife—any child can see that—but it's quite lost on her. I wish she *had* liked you better than me. I hate being married; but somehow," he adds, getting up and looking at himself in the glass first, and then at Guy—"I don't know how the deuce it is—women always did like me better than you, in spite of your title and your money."

To which Guy answered by a savage anathema; but all the same, before they parted for the night, he had given his brother a cheque for thirty pounds, and re-

quested him as a personal favour not to mention his loss at *écarté* to Milly. Adrian was quite happy to comply with this wish, and the next morning gave his wife the money with a charming grace, and received in return a loving kiss, and as many thanks as though the money had not been her own ; for Milly had a very delicate mind.

The meeting between Mrs. Charteris and Mary Etherege has been convened, and Milly goes to it feeling anything but at her ease. She expects to be met with icy coldness ; it is quite probable, indeed, that Miss Etherege will utterly decline to enter into her plans—in any case, the interview can but be painful to both. She summons up all her tact as she ascends the stairs, and is ushered by a waiter into the sitting-room. A middle-aged woman is sitting there alone ; as the door opens, she rises and comes forward with an outstretched hand. Before that kind face all Milly's doubts vanish ; she takes the proffered

hand eagerly, and in a moment, through that strange law of sympathy so impossible to account for, the two women are friends.

For a long time they remain together in earnest conversation, and when Milly leaves the hotel, she feels far more satisfied with the aspect of affairs than when she entered it. Matters might have been worse—how many men of position and title in these latter days have made degrading marriages!—and if, after all, there was a mystery connected with Dolores' birth, the letter written by her mother on the eve of entering into another world left no doubt that she was well born. Miss Etherege had spoken warmly of her amiability and sweetness of disposition, and pronounced her sufficiently accomplished not to appear deficient in the position she was about to fill. So, when she meets Guy, Milly is able to say to him, with an encouraging smile,

“A little patience, and all will be well.”

"A thousand thanks, Milly!" he answers warmly. "Well, was the sister an awful dragon?"

"Dragon?—no. One of the kindest, best women I ever met. Under the circumstances, it seems quite wonderful to me that she could have behaved as she did. And as for Captain Etherege, he has acted nobly. Ah, Guy, you thought he was making a very small sacrifice in giving up this girl to you; but *I know*," she adds, very earnestly, "that it has almost broken his heart."

"Men's hearts are pretty tough," answers Guy, grimly; "and they need well be, to have to deal with your sex."

"Guy!" she exclaims, in a startled voice, "that is not like you! Surely you are not going to take to the fashionable man's jargon of the day, and speak ill of women?"

"No, indeed, Milly, I am not. I was a fool to say what I did; and no one has a greater contempt than I have for men who

make it their business to go about abusing women, and speaking disrespectfully of them. I am quite sure a man who ever loved, and has been loved by a good woman, would never say anything but what was kind and generous of them. In nine cases out of ten the men who abuse women could not get the woman they wanted, and consider themselves ill-treated because she thought some one else worthier to be preferred to him. No; please God, I hope I shall never get into that hateful, unmanly habit; and I am very much obliged to you for pulling me up."

"Well," she answers, smiling, "you will have no cause to be bitter, for you are going to marry a very pretty girl, who is devoted to you, and of whom I hear everything that is charming."

"Poor little girl!" he murmurs, with a sigh. "I only hope she won't be disappointed in me. I can't think why she should have taken it into her foolish little

head to think so much about me; only I suppose I was almost the first Englishman she ever saw, and, being English herself, she naturally thought more of me. By Jove!" he exclaims, angrily, "I wish I could discover that scoundrel of a father of hers, and make him acknowledge her! I would give five thousand pounds down this minute for a good clue. It must have been true what the mother wrote, must it not? She would not have written a lie on the verge of the grave?"

"Impossible! and there seems no doubt Mrs. Power was herself a lady—I have my own theory on the subject. I was thinking of it all the way home."

"And what is it?" asks Guy, eagerly.

"I think Miss Power's father must have been heir to some high position, and that, for some reason or other, when he married her mother, he was not able to acknowledge her publicly. Afterwards, perhaps, he tired of her, or had a chance of making a

good marriage, and counting on her devotion to him, threw himself on her mercy not to divulge the marriage."

"A pretty blackguard he must have been !" interrupts Guy, hotly.

"Remember, this is pure surmise on my part."

"I can't believe any woman would have consented to such infamous treatment," continues Guy. "And if she were the rightful wife of a man in his position, and could prove it, is it likely she would go away and shut herself up in a place like Rouen, and live on a miserable pittance?"

"I do not know," Milly says, thoughtfully. "If a woman loves a man with all her heart, I think there is very little she will not sacrifice for him, if he only knows how to appeal to her. Perhaps he concealed his second marriage from her ; perhaps, by the time she knew it, he had other children—a son perhaps ; but," she adds, break-

ing off, "one may conjecture ten thousand things, and none of them be right; only I think one is bound to believe her letter, and that seems to point towards my conclusion."

"Yes, I believe you are not far from the truth; but," Guy adds, impatiently, "if one could only prove it!"

"I doubt you ever will. Such care seems to have been taken to hide every trace of identity. I suppose, too, she must have destroyed her marriage certificate, so that even if one gained a clue to the husband, which is very improbable, it might be impossible to prove the marriage, which perhaps took place abroad; and don't you think, Guy, that it is perhaps as well to rest certain in our own minds that Dolores' antecedents were all that we can wish, than——"

"Yes, I understand," interrupts Guy, impatiently. "Well, it seems as if we *must*



rest satisfied with what we know, for there appears little chance of our ever learning anything more."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## WHAT DOLORES DISCOVERS.

THEY have all dined at the *table-d'hôte* of the Grand Hotel—Sir Guy, Captain and Mrs. Charteris, Dolores, and Miss Etherege—nay, Milly has even thought it expedient to ask Mr. Vansittart to be of the party, as a future witness, should one be needed. Dinner is over, Dolores and her friend have been duly presented to Captain and Mrs. Charteris, and they are all sitting together in the courtyard of the hotel, drinking their coffee. It is a bright warm Spring evening—early Spring, to be sure, but still Spring, for it is the middle of April, and the last few days have been

as hot as June. Milly is talking confidentially to Miss Etherege, Guy to Dolores; while Adrian and Mr. Vansittart are engaged in a discussion on dinners. This does not hinder either of them from casting occasional glances at Dolores—Adrian from admiration, strongly impregnated with curiosity; his friend from unmixed admiration.

“What an awfully pretty little girl!” he whispers. “I don’t know when I’ve seen such a lovely little face; and yet she seems to remind me of somebody. Who is she?”

“My dear fellow, I am as much in the dark as yourself,” returns Adrian. “An old acquaintance of Guy’s, evidently. I think he’s in luck.”

“I think so too; and but that appearances are deceitful, I should say the little beauty is decidedly *épris* with Master Guy. I wonder whether I could make any impression on the old woman, mother, aunt, duenna, or whatever she may be. She

looks like a lady, though she isn't handsome."

"Bet you five pounds to two she snubs you!" whispers Adrian, laughing. "I don't know how it is, Van, but dowagers seem to have a natural mistrust of you."

"Not till they find out that I have no money," he retorts, with a shrug; "and indeed, as you know, my dear fellow, my only vice—in fact, the only vice a man can have in a woman's eyes—is poverty. But I take your bet all the same." And waiting for a convenient opportunity, Mr. Vansittart delicately introduces himself into the conversation that Milly and Miss Etherege are engaged in. But from that moment Mary drops quietly out of it, although Jack Vansittart appeals frequently to her, and only answers by monosyllables to his polite questions and remarks.

Meanwhile Captain Charteris has joined his brother and Dolores. At first, when Adrian speaks to her, she blushes and

trembles, but there is no man living who has more tact when he chooses, or possesses the art of pleasing more perfectly than Captain Charteris. So in a very short time she is quite at home with him, and feels sure, in her own mind, that he does not remember her. Guy sits for a few moments watching the two, thinking a little bitterly—"I suppose he wants to cut me out there too. Well, he is a good-looking fellow—there can be no two opinions about that; but I think women must be a little shallow, to be won over so easily by a handsome face and pleasant manner."

Dolores is looking quite bright and pleased, and Guy turns somewhat abruptly, and joins Jack Vansittart, who is languishing out of the conversation with the two other ladies, and casting somewhat envious glances at Adrian.

"That's a sweet pretty little creature, your friend!" he whispers, as Guy drops into the chair next him. "I say, Guy,

what a deuced good-looking fellow that brother of yours is!—and how all the women seem to take to him at once. What beats me is, that he seems to treat it all as coolly as possible, as if it were his due. I don't believe he was ever in love in his life."

"Hush!" says Guy, softly, looking towards Milly.

"Oh! of course no man ever is in love with his wife; but if *he* isn't, she has had plenty who were."

"I hope I shall be in love with mine," answers Guy, a little stiffly, not noticing the latter part of the sentence.

"I should think you're too good a judge to get married, my boy—at least, for ten years. Not but what that little fairy opposite would make a very lovely Lady Wentworth. Who is she, by the way?"

Guy has known Jack Vansittart too long to be offended by his familiarity, but it does not please him just at present. So

he answers huffily, and not very judiciously,

"If you want her whole family history, I am afraid I cannot give it you, but her name is Power, and—I am going to marry her, at your service!" he is about to add, when he recollects himself, and stops, colouring a little.

"Don't be angry, my dear boy. You know I always was a deuced inquisitive fellow; but her face puzzles me—I am sure I've seen it before."

"In a picture, perhaps?" suggests Guy. "Does she remind you of 'La Cruche Cassée'?"

"That's it—that's it!" cries Jack, triumphantly; "now I've got it. I hate to be puzzled about anything; but," he continues, energetically, "this one will give the picture stones and beat her. Well, but where does she live?—tell me all about her. 'Pon my life, Guy, this is not curiosity; I'm *tremendously* interested. Tried to make up to the old lady just now,

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but she wouldn't have it at any price, confound her ! so I have lost two sovereigns to Adrian. He said she wouldn't, but how the deuce could *she* know I hadn't any money ?"—For Jack will never depart from his theory that nothing but poverty can ever cause him to meet with a rebuff from a woman.—“I suppose she's the mamma ?”

“No,” Guy answers, — “no relation. Miss Power's mother died in Rouen last year, and she has lived with Miss Etherege ever since.”

“Rouen !” cries Jack, pricking up his ears,—“Rouen ! Now what the deuce have I heard about you in connection with Rouen ? Did Miss Power live there ?”

“Yes,” he answers, crimsoning with anger ; “but——”

“Ah yes, I know,” (interrupting him)—  
“I remember, Master Guy. A pretty story I heard about you and Rouen last season!—but this little lady had nothing to do with it, so you needn't look so



furious. No, no, quite another affair," he continues, chuckling to himself; "some little Normandy peasant—ha! ha!"

Happily for Guy, at this juncture the waiter comes with the bill, and the conversation, which had been fast becoming unbearable, receives a check. But presently Jack returns to it, though, happily, not at the point where he left it.

"Did I hear the name of Etherge?" he asks.

"Yes; that lady is Miss Etherge."

"Any relation to Etherge who was in the —th?"

"Sister, I believe."

"Ah! my eldest brother was in the same regiment; they were great chums. Capital good fellow Etherge was, until that infernal woman sent him to the deuce. Why do all the good fellows get sent to the deuce by women, I wonder? I was, I know," he adds, naïvely. "By-the-way, I saw *her* at Monaco last Winter; she

seemed rather by way of being prosperous. I should like to know what has become of him, poor old chap !”

“Hush !” says Guy, uneasily ; “she will hear you.” And, fortunately, at this moment Milly rises, and thinks it is time to be going.

“What shall we do ?” she says. “It is not nine yet. I think, as it is so fine and warm, a drive along the Boulevards would be very pleasant, if,” she adds, reflectively, “we could only get a decent carriage.”

“I ordered one to be here at nine,” Guy answers ; “it wants five minutes to it now,” looking at his watch.

“You will come, too, I hope ?” Milly says, turning to Miss Etherege,—“you and Miss Power.”

“Thank you, I think not,” Mary answers ; but, seeing Dolores’s face fall, adds —“But perhaps you will let Dolores accompany you ?—I see she would like it.”

“By all means, and we will drop you

first at your hotel. Adrian, shall we pick you up afterwards?" she asks, rather ignoring Vansittart, whom she does not particularly like.

"Oh no, Van and I will get a *fiacre* and smoke a cheerful weed. Guy, I know, will sacrifice anything for the sake of ladies;" and with rather a mocking smile, he puts them into the carriage which has just driven up, and bending forward to Dolores with his most charming manner, hopes they will meet again very shortly.

It is quite right of him to say this, of course; but Milly cannot help feeling a twinge of jealousy—already she hardly likes the idea that this girl is to be an inmate of her house; but she tries hard to check the inhospitable thought. Later on, when Dolores too has been taken home, she and Guy compare notes about the evening, and agree that it has been a perfect success.

"Although that fellow Vansittart kept

me on tenter-hooks half the time with his blundering questions," Guy says. "I was on the point of letting out the whole thing. You see, Milly," apologetically, "I'm a stupid straightforward sort of fellow, and I'm not very good at—at——"

"Deception," she adds, laughing, "and I, being a woman, of course am,—is that it, Guy?"

"Oh, Milly," reproachfully, "you know I do not think so; and besides," tenderly, "is it not all for my sake?"

"Well, I am very glad that horrid Mr. Vansittart came, because he is a regular gossip, and will spread the whole story of the meeting over London this season, which will save us a great deal of trouble. And to-night, you know, Guy, you must speak to Stevens."

"Yes, I know," wearily. "Oh, how glad I shall be when all this is over! Good night, Milly; thank you a thousand times,

and," anxiously, "I *hope* you have not tired yourself."

"Stevens," he says, later in the evening.

"Stevens," very abruptly.

"Yes, Sir Guy."

"You—you remember Miss Power—at Rouen, you know."

"Yes, Sir Guy," imperturbably.

"You will probably see her to-morrow—with Mrs. Charteris," pausing.

"Yes, Sir Guy."

"And—and—Stevens?" turning suddenly upon him. "I think you are a good fellow, and wish to serve me."

"Yes, indeed, Sir Guy."

"Then you will not give one word or hint—or *hint, mind*—of ever having seen her before, except by chance meeting her one day in the streets of Rouen?"

"Certainly not, Sir Guy."

"Thank you."

"This," reflected Mr. Stevens to himself when alone,— "this is a rum start. What

does it mean ? Is he going to marry her ? Well, we shall see. He's a good fellow, anyhow, is Sir Guy, and behaved like one gentleman to another. Many masters would have said, Look here, Stevens, if you don't split, I'll give you this, that, or the other ; if you do, I'll send you to the devil ; but no, he's a real gentleman, so he don't try bribery and corruption, but appeals to my honour. And blank me !" adds Mr. Stevens, vigorously, "if I don't justify his good opinion. He'll make it up to me some day, I know, and if I make up my mind to go to my brother in America—as I *shall* do, if I get another letter like the last—a little present won't come amiss ; and, of course, if he's goin' to marry this gal after all, it'll reconcile him more to losin' me."

The next few days Dolores spent almost entirely in the society of Mrs. Charteris. Miss Etherege was always asked to be of the party, but Milly perfectly understood why she preferred to keep aloof, and never

pressed her invitations. It was settled that they were to leave Paris in a week, and Dolores was to accompany them. Milly consented to the engagement between her and Guy being ratified the day previous to their leaving.

“And then I may wear my ring,” says Dolores, smiling, when Guy makes this announcement. “I have been so afraid all this time of keeping it in my box, lest some one should steal it; it only feels safe on my finger.”

When the happy day arrives, and Guy is permitted to treat her *en fiancée*, he gratifies himself by taking her out and buying her a host of beautiful things, until she is bewildered by her riches, and almost ashamed.

“Please—please not to buy me anything more,” she cries at last; “you know I am not used to all these things. Marcelline and I shall be so afraid of losing them. And oh!” she adds, looking at

him with wonder, "how rich you must be!"

He smiles at her *naïveté*.

"One thing is certain," he says to himself, "it is not for my money that she loves me, that is one consolation." And in the frugal life that the child has always led, never being tempted to envy by seeing the riches of others, and feeling no want of more than she possessed, the thought of Guy's possible or probable wealth had never for one moment dawned across her brain. She had never been in a large house, never seen beautifully-dressed women until she came to Paris, never been to theatres or gay sights, and had not the faintest idea of the value of money; indeed, with her two hundred and fifty pounds a year, and so few expenses, she considered herself passing rich. Now that she beheld so many splendours, and was witness of what seemed to her the fabulous sums that Guy expended on her, she felt ill at ease; the sacrifice that so great and rich a personage



was making in marrying anyone so poor and humble as herself weighed upon her.

Milly, according to Guy's desire, had ordered quite a trousseau for the girl, that it might not be supposed, when she was presented to the world, that she was poor, or dependent for anything on his bounty.

One day, when they had left a house where Milly had been ordering two or three charming toilettes for her future sister-in-law, Dolores, blushing a great deal, stammered,

"Madame, I fear I must not have any more beautiful things ordered, or I shall not have the money to pay for them."

"But, my dear child, no one dreamed of your paying for them."

A still deeper flush suffuses the girl's cheek as she says, with just a little touch of pride,

"Pardon, Madame, Sir Guy is very good, very generous, but I could not receive these things from his kindness. I

have twelve hundred francs. I must keep some money for my journey, and I will therefore pray you not to let me spend more money than I can afford."

"Very well, dear," answers Milly kindly—"it shall be as you wish. If you will give me six hundred francs, I shall be able to pay your bills," and she cannot help smiling to herself as she thinks that six times the sum would not cover the orders she has given by Guy's direction. She is pleased, however, at this evidence of independence on the child's part, and tells Guy of it the same evening.

"Dear little soul!" he says tenderly; "it was very good of you, Milly, to manage so that she should not suspect. Fancy the little thing being so proud!"

Every night they went to some theatre or place of amusement. Dolores enjoyed it immensely—the plays, at least. She did not enjoy it when, sometimes, looking up suddenly for Guy to share her pleasure at

some touching scene or charming song, she would find his eyes fixed, not on the stage, nor on her, but on Mrs. Charteris. She could not quite read the expression in them, whether it was love or grief, or some other feeling she did not comprehend; but whenever she saw it, a bitter feeling seemed to creep into her heart, and she forgot to appeal for his sympathy in her pleasure.

One day they were sitting together alone, when she said suddenly,

"Sir Guy, when did you first meet Mrs. Charteris?"

"Oh! some time last Spring," he answers, trying to speak indifferently.

"Did you know her first, or me?"

"Oh! you, I think," (a little confused.)

"Why?"

"And was she going to marry your brother then?"

"No," (in a vexed voice.) "But why do you ask all these questions?"

"They are very simple ones," answers

the girl, calmly. "Is there any reason why you should be vexed to answer them?"

"Certainly not," Guy says, warmly; "but——"

"I have still some more to ask. Did your brother ask her soon after he met her to marry him?"

"Yes, I believe so," (impatiently.)

"I wonder," continues Dolores, reflectively, looking at him, and yet hardly seeming to see him—"I wonder how she should have preferred him to you?"

"Is he not fifty times handsomer than I am?" Guy answers, with some bitterness. "Do not all women fall in love with him? Indeed I am not quite sure that you are not beginning to be fascinated by him."

"I!" she exclaims, with a smile of superior wisdom; "oh! no. I understand him quite well."

"Do you, little wisehead?" (smiling.) "I doubt it."

"Oh! yes. I am not clever—rather foolish, perhaps, as you think me, but I can see quite well that Captain Charteris loves no one but himself. He is handsome—oh!" (impressively), "very, *very* handsome; but since he knows it and admires it himself, and only makes it the means to get all he wants, *I* should not love him for that. And look at his wife, how she adores him!"

Guy gives a little impatient shrug.

"Yes, I know it pains you to hear it, but she does. Ah! I would have taken you had I been her!"

"Dolores!" (with some anger), "what makes you talk in this way? It is not right. You are far too young to speak or think of such things. And how do you know for one moment that I ever had any thought of love for my sister-in-law?"

"How do I know?" Dolores says, contemptuously. "Oh! of course I am so

young that I must be blind; and have no reason either. Well, I will tell you how I know. You told me yourself that when," (blushing painfully)—"when I came to you in Paris, you would have asked me to marry, only there was an obstacle—now there is no obstacle—it was she! Do I not know?" she continues, with flashing eyes. "And can I not see now, every day, that you still love her? Do I not see your eyes rest on her as they never do on me? Do you not try to read her very thoughts? And often when I turn to speak to you, to ask you something, to tell you of my pleasure at what I see, you are thinking of her, and have forgotten even that I am there."

Guy listens, almost stupefied. For a moment he turns to the window to collect his thoughts. When he looks round, Dolores has gone.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE CLIFFS OF ALBION.

GUY does not attempt to follow her—he still stands by the window, deep in thought.

“Is it so?” he says to himself. “Am I such a poor hand at concealing my feelings that even this child has discovered them? What an utter fool I am! Why did I ever risk being with her again? What is the strange fascination she has for me? God help me, it is too strong for me!” And he buries his face in his hands. “She is my brother’s wife! She does not care two straws for me! I am engaged to this

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child, who really does love me, and yet night and day I seem to have no thought nor eyes but for this one woman, who can never be mine. I must and will pluck it out of my heart; but then I must get away somewhere, out of sight of her. Why did she not let me go my own way, and marry Dolores out of hand? Once married, perhaps I may get cured of my other love—please God, at least, I may!" he adds, reverently. "But there must be some change in our plans. Dolores cannot go on staying with her. I will go at once to my mother, when I return to England, and beg of her to receive her at Wentworth. I think she will. She is very kind-hearted; and, after a little, I don't doubt but that she will take to her. And I will marry her very, very soon!—there is no need to wait three months. I should be in a mad-house if I had to live all that time in the constant society of the woman I love, and the one who loves me. The woman I love!"



he thinks, bitterly. "I seem to have forgotten that she is my brother's wife, and that it is a sin and a crime to love her; but, somehow, it doesn't seem so, since she cares nothing for me!"

For some days after the scene with Dolores he studiously avoids Milly, is never in her presence, if he can avoid it, only speaks to her when she addresses him, and keeps his eyes even from her; so that Dolores never once surprises him looking at her.

"Have I offended you, Guy?" Milly asks softly, one day, when they are alone together for a moment.

"I do not think you could," he answers, quietly, rising and going to the window.

There is a moment's pause, and then he comes back, and stands in front of her, looking long and wistfully in her face.

"I may as well tell you the truth," he says, in a low voice. "It will make things easier, and you are not likely to misunder-

stand me. I know you are as far away from me as if—as if one of us were dead, but all the same, I have loved you ever since the day I first saw you! This sort of thing cannot go on—even if it were not wrong—I think it would kill me in time. Yes, you smile! I look strong and hale enough, don't I? But the stronger a man is the harder it is to crush his feeling. And it isn't fair to her—poor little girl!—for I am such a poor dissembler, it seems, that she has guessed it.”

“Guy,” says Milly, reaching out her hand to him, “I don't blame you for liking me—how can any woman?—but,” (sadly,) “I can't help feeling that it is only a bit of the perversity of human nature—just wanting the thing you can't have. If I had married you instead of Adrian, I daresay you would not think very much of me by now. I don't believe I really am a very nice person, though I have a sort of way, somehow, of leading people to think

I am, until they know me better. Look at Adrian," with a shade of bitterness, "he seemed fond of me before he married, but you see he does not think he has much of a prize now—does he?"

"I do not know what might have happened had I been permitted the happiness of marrying you. I think I should have loved you better every day. But," (abruptly,) "it is not that I have to speak of now. Knowing that I have this infatuation, or whatever it may be, I want you to help me to conquer it as far as I may. Let me keep away from you—do not be kind to me—do not notice me. As soon as I return to England, I will go straight to Wentworth, and ask my mother to receive Dolores; and down there, perhaps,"—smiling wistfully—"I shall forget you, and fall desperately in love with my future wife."

"No difficult task, I am sure," Milly answers, rising, with tears in her eyes.

"God bless you, Guy ! Remember, we all have our crosses in life, and the hardest to bear are those that we make for ourselves. I would not for the world cause that poor child the pain of jealousy, for I think there is no harder pang to bear."

"Ay," answers Guy ; and, with one last look at her, he goes.

The day of departure has arrived, and Dolores takes leave of Mary Etherege with many tears and embraces.

"You forgive me, dear Mary ? Tell me once more that you forgive me. And you will pray Philip to think kindly of me too ? Indeed, indeed, when I remember all your kindness, both of you, to me, it takes away all my happiness in my future, for I feel as if my ingratitude will in turn be punished."

"My dear child," Mary answers, very kindly, "do not think any more about sad things. Go and be happy in your new life. I pray God it may be a very bright

one; and I dare answer for Philip that he feels no anger in his heart towards you, and would be happiest by hearing of your happiness."

"And you will write to me often, and some day," says Dolores, pleadingly, "dear Mary, you will come and see me in my new home? Oh! how happy I shall be when that day comes!"

"Yes, I will write to you, and perhaps some day I may meet you in London. At all events, you shall know where I am. And now, my dear, it is almost time to start."

"Mary," (hurriedly slipping the ring Philip had given her from her finger,) "I feel I have no right to this. Will you—*will you* make me happy by taking it? *Do*, dear Mary!"

But Mary puts it gently back on her finger.

"You would not wish to cause Philip more pain, Dolores?"

And at this instant Guy arrives, and in another minute has carried the child off, crying, but trying very hard to smile through her tears.

“Are you so sorry to leave France?” Guy asks, kindly, pressing her hand as they drive along the handsome white streets, and her tears still flow. “And are you afraid at the thought of your own country, that you have never seen? I daresay Marcelline has been frightening you with dreadful stories about it. Is it not so?” he says in French, turning to Marcelline; but she utters a polite and vigorous disclaimer.

But, in truth, the good soul is not without her misgivings, and her horror of the sea-passage is so great that it requires as strong a counterbalance as her love for Dolores to induce her to undertake it.

This the girl imparts to her lover, and he rejoins, smiling, in an undertone,

“I’ll be bound she’ll be horribly ill, poor

soul!—foreigners always are; but we won't tell her so. I am rather anxious to know about you though, darling; for if you prove a good sailor, I mean to take you to Norway in my yacht for our honeymoon."

She smiles. The tears are all dried now, and she is supremely happy at being with him, and feeling that this fine, noble-looking man, as she thinks him, really belongs to her, or rather she to him. Other women may think Captain Charteris handsome, but for her, she wonders how anyone can prefer him to Sir Guy, who is infinitely more noble, more distinguished-looking.

She has appealed for Marcelline's opinion on the subject, and has received it. M. le Capitaine was handsome, even very handsome, but he had not that look of real goodness that made the beauty of Sir Guy's face. And Marcelline's judgment is perfectly correct.

It is a bright sunny day; the stir

and bustle is pleasant to Dolores, and although she has nothing to do, as Guy and his servant manage everything, there is a kind of contagion about the general activity, and she *feels* rather important. Milly and her husband arrive immediately after them; fortunately for Marcelline, Mrs. Charteris's maid is French, and has travelled a good deal, so she feels rather more happy in her mind at the thought of the journey made under such auspices. She has been cautioned about what she is and is not to say, and, gossip though she is, once her child's interest is concerned, can be discretion itself.

Guy attends scrupulously to the comforts of both his fair companions, and Adrian as scrupulously to his own. Stevens is in charge of a valuable hamper, which he hands to his master in the carriage. When opened, it contains two choice little bouquets, bottles of scent, fruits, sweetmeats, and books, and a *recherché* lunch, to be con-



sumed at a more advanced period of the journey.

“Really, Guy, I think you are the most thoughtful man in the world!” cries his sister-in-law. “What a treasure of a husband you are going to have, Dolores!” and such a proud, radiant look beams in the girl’s eyes, it is pleasant to behold the reflection of so much bright young hope and love.

“Milly,” says Adrian lazily, “I shall be very happy to bet you twelve to six in gloves that he don’t think of all these touching little attentions when he’s been married six months.”

“I am very happy to take your bet,” answers Milly, laughing, and taking out her tablets. “Oh, how the carriage shakes! Write it for me, Adrian.”

“Can’t move,” he says, languidly. “Guy will do it for you—he is such an active fellow. And besides,” (maliciously,) “he always does everything for you.”

Guy takes the tablets gravely and writes.

"There," he says, smiling, as he hands them back ; "now, if I fall off in my good behaviour, here will be my own testimony against me."

"Don't put any faith in his promises, Miss Power—at least, Dolores. I may call you that now, may I not? You see, Guy calls my wife Milly, though he is looking at me now as if he thought my proposition an infernal piece of cheek. Dolores," he adds, caressingly,—“it is such a soft, pleasant name to say! Milly, I wish you were called Dolores!”

"Do you?" (rather drily.)

"Well, I don't know," (reflectively;) "perhaps it would be a bore for one's wife to have such a long name; it doesn't do to say it too often. Fancy shouting upstairs, Dolores, Dolores, Dolores, when she was keeping you waiting!"

They all laugh; his languid way of saying it is irresistible.

"The worst of it is, Guy," he continues, without the faintest smile on his own face—"the worst of it is, I don't see how you are to abbreviate it. Dolly—no, that would be too dreadful! And there is literally no other. The only thing that I can see for it is, she must never keep you waiting."

"You see, Adrian," answers his brother, laughing, "I am not quite as delicate as you, so the exertion would not try me so much. And I think," looking very kindly at Dolores, "it is such a sweet name that I shall not mind how often I have to say it."

"Now, Guy, there's a good fellow—don't begin to spoon; it is too hot; and besides, it always makes other people uncomfortable. It's such a selfish thing! I never did in public—did I, Milly?"

"Never," she answers, biting her lip and looking out of the window.

"But, *à propos* of the basket, I've been going to remark ever so many times

—only one thing always drives another out of one's mind—that's just the way we spoil women. Of course, we're obliged to be tremendously civil and attentive and thoughtful before we get married; and then, afterwards, they expect one to go on with it, which, of course, you know, is a sheer impossibility. Fancy the strain on one's mind of always being on the look-out to anticipate a woman's wants! Dolores," (beseechingly,) "don't look at me as if I were some strange wild animal; you'll find a good many of the same kind, I assure you, the other side of the Channel."

Dolores smiles. She, like a great many older women, cannot help regarding him as one does a beautiful, wayward child. As a woman once said of him, "If he had not his handsome face, and that languid, caressing voice, one would think him intolerably selfish and impertinent; but he can afford to say or do anything."

Milly is quite under the influence.

When he speaks caressingly to her, what is there she would not do or sacrifice for him? But how she hates to hear him use that tone to any other woman!—and, to tell the truth, he does now, more often than to her. She is horribly, painfully jealous of him; she is already jealous even of Dolores, to whom he is pleased to be very kind and gracious, and is sorry to think the girl is going to make her home with them, even though it is only for a week. She fights against the feeling, and tries to be all the kinder to her brother's future wife; but her face is too expressive to conceal entirely what she feels. At all events, Guy reads it.

Boulogne is reached; they are on board the boat, and Dolores is quite bewildered by hearing English spoken on all sides of her.

“How strange it all sounds!” she says, clinging to Guy's arm nervously. “Do you know, I cannot understand half they

say, and they seem to talk so fast!"

"Little Frenchwoman!" he smiles, drawing her nearer to his protecting strength. "It will all be familiar enough to you soon. Now let me go and find a comfortable place for you and Milly, where you will be out of the smell of smoke, and the bustle."

"Is—is Mrs. Charteris," (hesitatingly,) "ever ill?"

"Never, I believe. But I don't think you need be afraid, dearest; besides, it won't be rough to-day."

"I think," says Dolores, shyly, "that I shall go downstairs, because," (blushing,) "I am told the *mal de mer* comes on very suddenly."

Though there is a fresh breeze outside, and several of the passengers suffer—notably the two Frenchwomen—Dolores enjoys her trip thoroughly; and Guy is charmed to think how well this beginning augurs for his yachting plans. They

arrive in excellent time at Milly's house in May Fair ;—a very much larger one than the first we saw her in, for, by Adrian's wish, she has let her country house, and come to live permanently in town. She would have been quite content to live down there with him—would have liked, indeed, much better to keep him away from the temptations of London, fond as she is of it herself,—but he resolutely combated the idea.

“What the deuce could I possibly do down there amongst an infernally stupid lot of country squires and squiresses, and parsons and parsonesses? The shooting is very fair, but it isn't as good as Guy's, and I can always have as much of that as I like, besides heaps of other places where I am used to go regularly ; and of course, if you have a place of your own, you are bound to entertain, and it's deuced expensive, besides being a bore.”

“I don't think there is anything pleas-

anter than entertaining, if you have a nice party," rejoins Milly, "and I hate to be under obligations to anybody."

"Oh! that's all very well, if you've got twenty thousand a year; but we have only four, and it's no use thinking of it. And if we want to ask anyone particularly, I'll get my mother to have them to Wentworth. Guy is sure not to object."

"Well, but suppose your brother marries." (This conversation is soon after Milly's marriage.)

"I don't suppose he will, but, if he does, I shall make myself agreeable to my sister-in-law, and you can do the same to Guy, and we shall get all we want."

It need hardly be said that these views are very little in accordance with Milly's own, but she gives way, at all events, on the subject of letting the house, much as she dislikes the idea.

Adrian takes it all as a matter of course; he is accustomed to have sacrifices made



for him. When Guy heard all this, which he did from his brother in Paris, he said to himself, "Milly shall not miss her country house. Wentworth shall be her home whenever she chooses to go to it." But now that circumstances are so changed, that he is going to marry Dolores, and that he feels Milly's absence, not her presence, is essential to his happiness and well-being, he is utterly perplexed what to do.

"Adrian will of course expect to come to Wentworth for partridge and pheasant-shooting; she *must* come if he does, and then," adds Guy, groaning, "there will be the old story over again, and worse, for when Dolores is mistress at the Court, if she chooses to be jealous, she can make it very unpleasant for Milly. She is a dear, good little girl; but once a woman is jealous, and in a position to wreak her resentment on her rival, they're all the very——"

"Wentworth Station!" shrieks the por-

ter at this juncture ; for the last soliloquy has taken place in the train, *en route* for Wentworth Court.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## LADY WENTWORTH.

LADY WENTWORTH is sitting in her own room, awaiting the arrival of her son. It is indeed what most ladies would call their boudoir; but Lady Wentworth likes plain English names, and it therefore always goes by the name of "my lady's sitting-room." Every article in it is handsome, and useful too, if we except the beautiful collection of china, which is my lady's chief delight. She is one of the old school, but without the homeliness that usually characterises that type—she is essentially a *grande dame*. You recognise that at once by her manner and dress.

She never wears anything but the richest silks and brocades, even to visit her garden and poultry-yard; but on these occasions her dress is always looped daintily over a spotless-white petticoat, just disclosing what is still a beautiful little foot, in a clocked-silk stocking and high-heeled shoe, and a large white muslin apron protects the front of her dress. Her hair, almost white now, is brushed up after the manner of an old picture, and surmounted by a cap of costly lace. Her delicate fingers always flash with diamonds.

She has her own ideas about the *devoir* of an English lady, as her son (who probably inherits them from her) has his of what is right and proper for himself. She thinks it the business of a woman of quality to act and dress in accordance with her position—silk and satin and rich fabrics are the appropriate garb of the rich and well-born; cotton and woollen material for the lower classes. She has never permitted

her children, or any servant but her maid, to see her *en déshabillé*; she would consider by so doing that she derogated from the dignity of her position as head of the house. Her servants stand in great awe of her, though they are devoted to her, for she is the kindest and most considerate mistress in the world; only her orders must be obeyed to the letter.

Certainly she is an autocrat, although her rule is a kindly one. To the poor she is a bountiful benefactress, although she takes care to discriminate in her benevolence; and it is these who, least of all, are inclined to agree in the general opinion that she is proud and haughty. It is natural that a woman of a dominant temper, living for many years in a state of absolute authority over the people about her, should become a little arbitrary and exacting; but Lady Wentworth has such a fund of real kindness and courtesy underlying her proud exterior, that those who know her well, see

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much more to love and admire than to fear.

She superintends every detail of her household, and feels, with some pride, that when Guy brings home a wife to the Court, she will be able to deliver up the reins of government, and hand over everything in perfect order to the new mistress. It will be a very sore trial to her to leave Wentworth and retire to the Dower House; but she has been preparing to meet the blow ever since Guy has been of a marriageable age; for she is perfectly determined that no persuasion shall induce her to remain one day after the new *châtelaine* is installed. She will come to the Court as a visitor, but let the then mistress mismanage her house as she may, *her* lips shall be sealed.

Lady Wentworth from choice leads a somewhat retired life, although she makes a charming hostess, and has always been ready and willing to entertain any friends

whom her sons choose to invite; all their men friends are devoted to her—sometimes the women think her a little stiff and old-fashioned. However, the house is a most pleasant one to stay in, and Guy and his mother, equally thoughtful and hospitable, take ample care to provide amusement for their guests of both sexes. She is very fond of young people, and somehow or other the most wayward boy or girl never takes liberties in her presence. She belongs to a very old family, whose fortunes were somewhat decayed in her girlhood, through the extravagance of her father, and his father before him. She had one brother and two sisters. All three girls were remarkably handsome, and were expected to redeem the family fortunes by good marriages. The two younger ones amply fulfilled the expectations that had been formed for them; but Margaret, the eldest, afterwards Lady Wentworth, had fallen deeply in love with her handsome

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cousin, Captain Charteris, and had engaged herself to him, although her family utterly refused to sanction the marriage. With all her heart and soul she loved this man, who was certainly not worthy of so great a love, and for his sake would have remained unmarried to the day of her death; but he made any sacrifice on her part unnecessary, by himself marrying a woman a good deal his senior, with a large fortune.

At this time Margaret, who was seven and twenty, still handsome and very unhappy, met Sir Guy Wentworth, who fell deeply in love with her, and by his extreme kindness and tenderness for her, won, if not her love, at all events her friendship and esteem. For four years they lived happily together, Lady Wentworth making an admirable wife, and her husband thinking there was no woman in the world like her; then, after a short illness, Sir Guy died, leaving her with one child, a boy, two years old. Very deeply and sincerely



did she regret him, but it was not wonderful that when, some eighteen months later, she again met the man whom she had so passionately loved, and, he being also free, asked her to marry him, she consented. And was she happy when she had obtained her heart's desire? She was never heard to say aught to the contrary, but her cheeks grew thin and pale. Colonel Charteris was frequently absent from home. One son was born of this marriage, and a daughter, who died in her infancy.

In a locket set round with brilliants which never left the mother's neck, was a miniature of one of the loveliest child's faces conceivable. Perhaps the mother loved it all the more because it was so like the husband she adored. For, in spite of all, perhaps because of all, she loved him with the same unchanging love, and when he died ten years after their marriage, it almost broke her heart. For years after, she was scarcely seen to smile, and could hardly

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even bear to have her children with her. Good men and women are rarely loved and regretted like those who have made the hearts of those who love them ache so bitterly. I wonder why !

The two boys grew up, and in her heart the younger was dearer to the mother, although she strove conscientiously not to show any difference ; but Guy knew from a child that he was not his mother's favourite, and felt it keenly. Nevertheless he had always been a kind and affectionate brother to Adrian, and many a difficulty had he helped him out of since they were boys together. Lady Wentworth had the highest opinion of her elder son—she both loved and respected him—but Adrian was the darling, the apple of her eye, as his father had been before him ; there was just the same difference in her love for her children as there had been in her love for their fathers. She knew and deplored Adrian's selfishness and instability of

character, but there was no sacrifice in the world she would not have made for him. All his life she had been saving for him, for Colonel Charteris had only a life interest in his first wife's money, and died in debt, having also spent what little he had of his own. Guy, out of sheer good-will, allowed him seven hundred a year, which he did not see fit to withdraw on his marriage, and the other three hundred came from his mother. Three times, between them, Lady Wentworth and Guy had paid his debts. First he went into a cavalry regiment, then exchanged into the Guards, and finally sold out, considering it too great a bore to be under anybody's orders. All this time he had lived as though he possessed Guy's fortune, and it was not until Guy was called upon to pay his debts for the third time—eight thousand pounds on this occasion—that he ever spoke with harshness to him.

“Look here, Adrian,” he said, sternly,

“ I’m not fond of reminding people of what I have done for them. I think you know by this time that’s not much in my line—but I’m going to do it now, once for all. You are not my own brother, you have no actual claim upon me whatever, but since I came of age I have regularly allowed you seven hundred a year ; on different occasions I have paid three thousand, five thousand, and eight thousand pounds for you, and this shall be the last, I take my solemn oath ! My house is your home, my chambers in town are at your disposal whenever you choose, my horses, my yacht, and almost everything I possess. If you have not sufficient gentlemanlike feeling to know that it is a blackguard thing to abuse generosity, I must take it upon myself, painful as it is, God knows, to remind you. Once for all, I will not pay any more of your debts. With a thousand a year, and free quarters, if you can’t live like a gentleman, I’m sorry for you, but you will

have no more from me, I swear to you. And I think you know when I have once passed my word I generally stick to it."

This happened about three months before Adrian's meeting with Mrs. Scarlett, or he would, in all probability, never have thought of marrying at all. He said as much to Guy one night in Paris.

"Ah! my dear fellow," he said, maliciously, "you might so easily have become the owner of your fair sister-in-law, if you had not been so infernally stingy with me after my little difficulties. If it hadn't been for money, I wouldn't have married the loveliest woman on God's earth!" (sighing). "There isn't one in all England and France I wouldn't sooner have for a sister-in-law than a wife."

Guy frowned and bit his lip, and Adrian, smiling to himself, enjoyed his little piece of revenge.

Lady Wentworth had been pleased with her younger son's marriage. She con-

sidered Milly elegant, well-bred, and very good style ; her fortune, too, was a great desideratum. And now she is called upon to approve Guy's choice of a wife, for the last letters she has received from both himself and Milly leave no doubt in her mind that he intends to marry, and she is waiting anxiously for his arrival, that she may hear full particulars concerning her new daughter-in-law. Her mind, too, has been dwelling considerably on her own future ; she has spent a whole morning at the Dower House, arranging in her own mind the purposes to which she will devote the various rooms and the new furniture that will be required. She has always had the gardens kept up, as flowers are the things she cares most for.

"I am surprised," she says to herself, "that Milly has never mentioned the young lady's connections. I do not like Guy's proposing upon so short an acquaintance. I fear he has not taken proper care to

assure himself that she is desirable in point of family as well as personal attractions, and it would be indeed deplorable to bring into the family, as head of it, a person of whose antecedents one had reason to be ashamed. I wonder if Guy is altered? It is a year since I have seen him. What can have made him take such a sudden idea of travelling into his head? Adrian half hinted to me—but oh! I hope that was not true—at all events, he must be cured now. I should never have fancied Guy a man to fall suddenly or violently in love; but how little one knows even of one's own children!"

A sound of wheels strikes upon her ear; in another moment she hears Guy's cheery greeting to the servants; another, and he throws the door open, and is clasped in her arms. They have not met for more than a year; the tears come into the mother's eyes as she feels the strong arms of her first-born round her; his are dim too.

"Why, mother, you look positively younger," he says, looking fondly in her face. "I haven't seen anyone so handsome as you all the time I've been away."

"And you," she replies, smiling through her tears—"you are grown, I think. How bronzed you are! You are a little thin, too; but you look very well," (proudly.) "I never thought you so good-looking before."

"How complimentary we both are!" he says, laughing. "Absence works wonders—doesn't it, mother?"

"Come, dear boy," she answers, drawing him to the sofa, "tell me about Adrian and Milly, and my new daughter-in-law."

"Oh!" says Guy, reddening, though he has been preparing himself a whole week for the question, "Adrian and his wife are all right; and with regard to the other matters, it is such a long story that it won't do to begin now. I feel so dirty, after travelling, and it is nearly dinner-



time. Let me know not time and then you know. My dear mother we shall have all the evening before us."

"Tell me the thing, John," says his mother, anxiously beginning him. "You forget to say in your letter—does she belong to a good family?"

"You shall hear all in good time," he answers, making his excuse.

Dinner is over, the servants are gone, and Lady Wrentham comes over and seats herself in an arm-chair by her son.

"Now, my dear," she says, taking his hand affectionately, "I am all impatience."

"Well, mother," he answers, returning the pressure, "it is for you to put questions, and for me to answer them. Of course you will want to know what she is like?"

"Of course; though that is not the most important matter after all."

"Well, without undue prejudice, I may say that she is extremely pretty, as every

one else is of the same opinion. She is slim, though not short, has lovely eyes and hair, a skin like a white lily; she speaks French better than English, and is a perfect little lady."

"I shall like to see her," says the mother, smiling. "And I suppose, Guy, you are desperately in love with her?"

"Oh! she is the dearest little girl in the world."

But, to the mother's keen ears, the true ring is wanting in the tone.

"And where did you first meet her?"

It has been arranged between Guy and Milly how much is to be told to Lady Wentworth—they both know her well enough to feel that, if she were aware of Dolores having followed him to Paris, she would look upon it as utterly unpardonable, and would be at once fatally prejudiced against her. So he tells his mother of his meeting with her in the old Rue Eau de Robec, of his wishing to sketch her, and

of his obtaining a tardy permission from Marcelline; but he says nothing of his frequent visits, or the child's sudden fancy for him, but proceeds swiftly to the second meeting in Paris.

His mother interrupts him.

"You have mentioned that she had a mother, but I should like to hear a little more about her; and you have not yet told me who her father was."

So Guy, painfully conscious of the difficulty of the task, tells her all he has heard of Mrs. Power, of the letters she left at her death, and her solitary life at Rouen. At each word the mother's heart sinks lower. When he has said all there is to say, an icy hand seems to hold her—she cannot speak a word. An unknown illegitimate girl mistress of Wentworth, the successor of a long line of women whose connections had been sometimes amongst the highest, but always unimpeachable. And Guy was not

committing this folly on the spur of a mad, unconquerable passion !

A silence falls upon both. Guy is dimly, uncomfortably conscious of what is taking place in his mother's mind, and he is not in love enough to combat her objections, and hotly take up the defence of his intended wife.

When Lady Wentworth speaks again, it is in an altered voice, as though she had suddenly awakened from a doze.

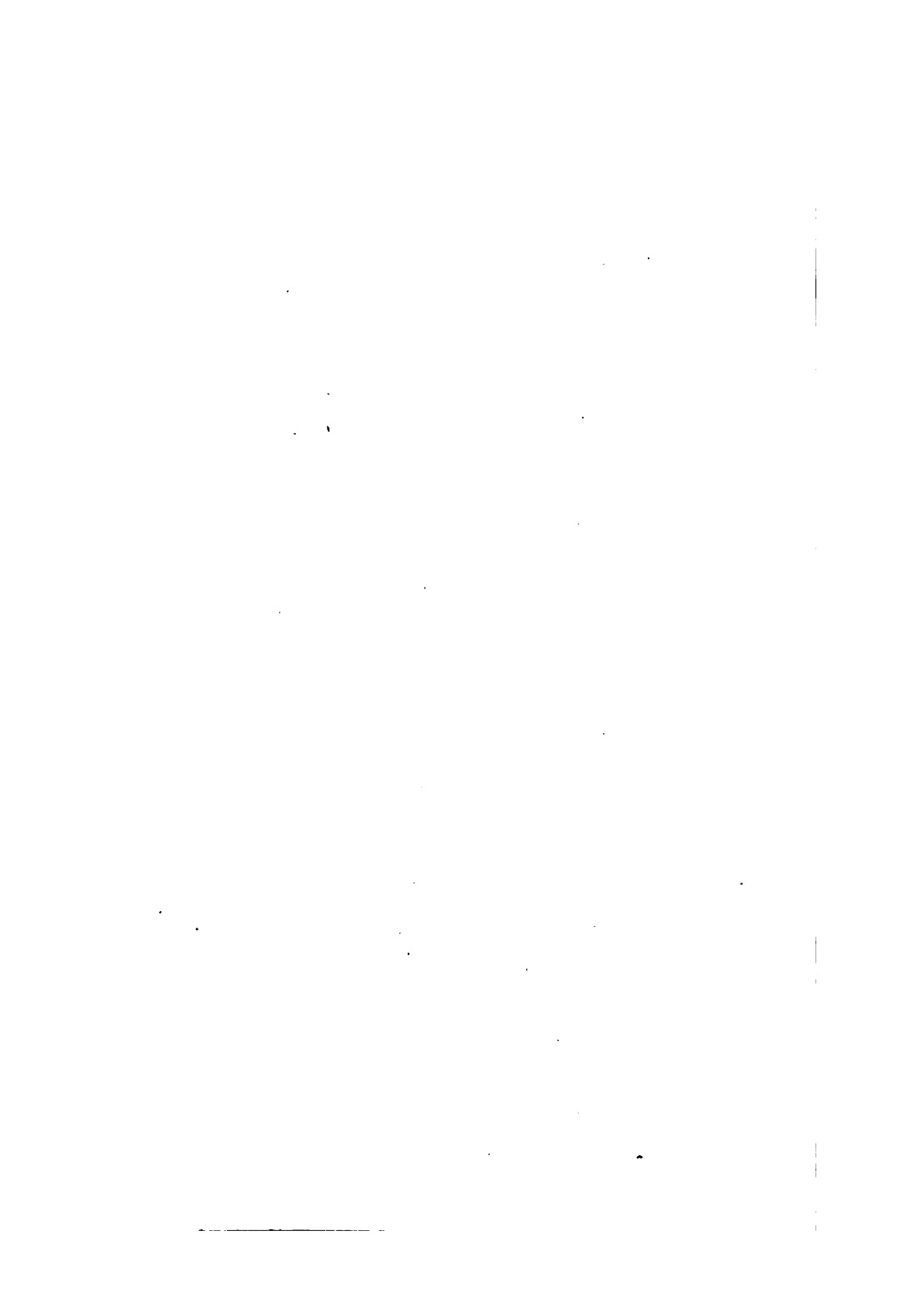
"Ring for coffee, Guy, and we will go into my room, and you must tell me all about your travels."

Guy is glad enough to change the subject; nor do they again revert to it during the evening. When his mother has retired for the night, he betakes himself to his room, and, lighting a cigar, proceeds to commune with his own thoughts. "I knew she would take it badly, but this is worse than I expected. Very likely she will refuse to receive Dolores here

until she comes as my wife. Well," sighing, "I suppose it is not a very good business. I wonder why Fate was pleased to turn my steps to Paris, and, above all things, into the Louvre, on that identical morning. I daresay she would have been happy enough with him if she hadn't met me. And," with a groan, "what am I going to do with her all my life? One can't force love; and perhaps she will grow to hate *me* in time, when she finds I'm a very mediocre sort of fellow, instead of the hero she has set up in her poor foolish little heart. I wonder why on earth one was sent into this world at all, or, once here, why we can't be allowed to be happy? I used to be happy enough until last year—the world was good enough for me then; I seemed to have dropped into an easy, comfortable life—hunting and shooting, yachting and women's society. I could enjoy them all to the full; and now somehow I don't seem to care for any of

them. And all this is the doing of one woman, and no fault of hers either, God knows ! I've fancied myself in love plenty of times before, but it was always pleasant, and never interfered with the other things I cared for ; but this seems to scorch up everything else, to lay all my life waste and bare, and yet never to have given me anything in its stead. And she !—Adrian will break her heart in time, as his father broke my mother's, curse him ! No, I don't mean that—God forgive me for saying anything bitter against the dead ; but only to think of men having such women as those, and not caring for them ! I used to feel it was such a good thing only to live, but now I think I should be glad to be well out of it."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has also become an important employer of women, with 5.5 million women employed in the public sector in 1995, compared with 4.5 million in 1980.

There are a number of reasons why the public sector has become an important employer of women. One reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of women in its workforce. In 1995, 88% of the public sector workforce were women, compared with 78% in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

Another reason why the public sector has become an important employer of women is that it has a high proportion of jobs that are part-time or flexible. In 1995, 22% of the public sector workforce were employed on part-time or flexible contracts, compared with 12% in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

A third reason why the public sector has become an important employer of women is that it has a high proportion of jobs that are well paid. In 1995, the average salary of a public sector employee was £18,000, compared with £15,000 in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

There are a number of other reasons why the public sector has become an important employer of women. One reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are secure. In 1995, 88% of the public sector workforce were employed on permanent contracts, compared with 78% in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

Another reason why the public sector has become an important employer of women is that it has a high proportion of jobs that are well located. In 1995, 22% of the public sector workforce were employed in London, compared with 12% in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

A third reason why the public sector has become an important employer of women is that it has a high proportion of jobs that are well matched to the skills of women. In 1995, 88% of the public sector workforce were employed in jobs that required a degree or higher qualification, compared with 78% in 1980. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector has a high proportion of jobs that are traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

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the 1990s, the number of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia has increased in the United Kingdom (Meltzer and Peck 1998). The prevalence of schizophrenia in the United Kingdom is estimated to be 1.2% (Meltzer and Peck 1998). The prevalence of schizophrenia in the United States is estimated to be 1.1% (Meltzer and Peck 1998).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with schizophrenia. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a set of guidelines for the management of schizophrenia (WHO 1993). The guidelines recommend that people with schizophrenia should be treated with a combination of medication and psychosocial interventions. The guidelines also recommend that people with schizophrenia should be treated in a community setting rather than in a hospital. The guidelines also recommend that people with schizophrenia should be treated by a multidisciplinary team.

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